The Nation. December 16, 1978 $1

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BLACK AMERICA

A Special Issue

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Race and Leadership
THE LEGACY THAT SOURED
ROGER WILKINS

Falling Behind Again
WHITE MYTHS OF BLACK ECONOMICS
HERBERT HILL

HALFWAY ON THE LONG WALK
CAREY McWILLIAMS

FINDING A REASON TO VOTE
CHARLES V. HAMILTON

BLACK WRITING IN THE 1970s
ROBERT BONE

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LETTERS.

KENNEDY IN GUATEMALA

New York City

Stephen Schlesinger ["How Dulles Worked the Coup d'Etat," *The Nation*, Oct. 28] is accurate in observing that history has "practically abandoned" the U.S. overthrow of the democratic Guatemalan Government in 1954. David Wise and Thomas Ross dealt with it in some detail in their 1964 work on the CIA, *The Invisible Government*. I described the coup and its aftermath in the Marxist quarterly, *Science & Society* (Summer, 1971), and more recently the North American Committee for Latin America published a detailed report in book form. All tell essentially the same story concerning the fifteen-month CIA conspiracy related by Schlesinger. . . .

A significant sequel has never, to my knowledge, received national airing. In 1963, Presidential elections were scheduled in Guatemala. Juan Jose Arevalo, elected as Guatemala's first democratic President in 1944, announced from exile his intent to run again. The popular response was so emphatic that his victory was seen as a foregone conclusion. The Kennedy administration, at the urging of Ambassador John O. Bell, then made the explicit decision to signal to Col. Enrique Peralta Azurdia, defense minister and military strong man, to take over as dictator and cancel the election. Peralta's dictatorial rule, until 1966, was condemned repeatedly by the Organization of American States for its brutality. Since then, only Presidential candidates approved by the military have been permitted to run for President. . . .

Castro was training in Mexico City in 1954. He absorbed the bitter lesson from the Guatemala refugees streaming in, including Che Guevara—no small Latin American country could hope to survive if left open to CIA subversion, which meant that it could not afford an open society. The CIA in Guatemala, as later in Chile, effectively used the free media to destabilize the society through false rumor and faked stories, and it corrupted large sections of the military and middle classes. The wealth and power at its disposal could not be matched by its victims. . . . *Max Gordon*

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

Walnut Creek, Calif.

Recently, concerned people are asking whether America is learning in Iran due to the Shah's difficulties there. This question should be expanded to include Nicaragua, the Philippines, Chile, South Korea, Cuba and other countries where the United States has been a major force in installing autocratic governments in power.

It is becoming clearer as time passes that the major foreign policies instigated by the United States since World War II have been far from adequate except for the Marshall Plan. It was a tragic mistake that Castro in Cuba was made an enemy by not cooperating with him from the start instead of driving him into the arms of the Soviets. It is difficult to conceive how U.S. policies could have been more ill-advised.

When the last shot of World War II was fired, the State Department began to throw its weight around the world to counter the Soviets by infiltrating governments, often with clandestine CIA tactics, to put someone in power who would be anti-Communist no matter how despotic he might be, usually with little regard for the welfare of the masses being governed. It was not deemed necessary that these heads of government embrace democratic principles but only that they could be trusted to oppose the Soviets, no matter if they ruled their people by tyranny. As could have been expected, the people are finally rising up to overthrow the tyrants and in some instances embracing Marxism which often does appeal to the masses when democracy is thwarted by a right-wing or military dictator. . . .

There is still little indication that this lesson has been learned and it appears that more and more of the U.S. puppets will crumble, leaving a void which will be difficult to fill with democratic regimes. This is a sad commentary on democratic doctrines, and on all civilization for that matter. However, it is readily explainable as all countries, whether democratic or authoritarian, operate on the premise that the end justifies the means in foreign affairs. The spirit of democracy is nonexistent beyond the water's edge of international diplomacy. . . . *Meldon C. Belknap*

MORE ON PAKISTAN

Montreal, Canada

I received *The Nation* of August 19-26 and read "The Trial of Ali Bhutto and the Future of Pakistan" by Ramsey Clark. I happen to be a great admirer of Mr. Clark, particularly after his courageous stand during the war in Vietnam and other civil and human rights affairs. I also have great admiration for his legal abilities and career but I am really not convinced about his description of the events occurring in Pakistan.

He happened to visit Pakistan for a short period of time and somehow made it his art to assess the situation as if it were nothing but lists of facts. How could Mr. Clark not mention that the judiciary in Pakistan has always been independent and the judges are not political appointees? Second, Bhutto or no Bhutto, nations do not fall with individuals, especially those who put their personal gains above the national uplift and development. The martial law in Pakistan happened to be a bloodless coup and remains that way so far. The army does not behave like the U.S. National Guard which could open fire on unarmed student protesters and later arouse national anger. The Pakistani Army comes out of the masses and they always have an inborn love and respect for their own people. But, coming back to Mr. Bhutto's trial, no one could be above law.

Pakistan happens to be an intellectual haven in that part of the world and produces lawyers, engineers, doctors, teachers and writers who not only serve their own country but also contribute by their education and ability to this continent. Injustice could not be tolerated for an indefinite period. Mr. Clark's . . . article has done a disservice to the Pakistani residents of the United States and Canada, as well as to the judiciary system of Pakistan.

Islam does not allow corrupt politicians. . . . Floggings and amputations for persons found guilty are exemplary punishments and once in effect would not produce monsters like Richard Speck and Charles Manson. . . .

It is best not to speak adversely about another religion unless one's knowledge is adequate to make such comments. . . .

Dr. Rauf A. Khalid, President,
Pakistan Association of Quebec

LINCOLN BRIGADE

Many of your readers must have known members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade who were captured in Spain, and either executed or returned alive, and would like to see their names and deeds permanently recorded. They can help do that now. A history of the Brigade is being prepared under the auspices of the Veterans of the Lincoln Brigade. Readers who have information about these volunteers, (present address, or that of their family) or can supply a biography of them, are asked to send it to me.

I would also greatly appreciate information about the whereabouts of copies of our newspaper, the *Daily News*, which were smuggled out of the concentration camp at San Pedro de Cardena.

Carl Geiser, 105 Lawrence Ave.,
Smithtown, N.Y. 11787

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EDITORIALS.

The First Commitment

Even as Vernon Jordan and a dozen other black leaders emerged from a two-and-a-half-hour White House meeting to denounce the President's inverted priorities, which once again leave blacks at the end of the line, *The Nation* was going to press with this special issue on Black America.

The condition of blacks in America is not, we are told, a politically profitable, popular or chic subject. It does not, in other words, sell magazines. It is, however, the very issue with which *The Nation* began in 1865—one of its founders was also a founder of the Anti-Slavery Society—and which has remained for us a touchstone in the general struggle for social justice.

It is appropriate that the contributors to this special number are veterans in the struggle for equal rights, men whose opinions and perspectives are as informed as they have been hard-earned. Carey McWilliams's unflagging involvement in the civil rights movement goes back to the 1930s. Herbert Hill, who joined the NAACP as Director of Labor Programs, has been the country's leading expert on these matters ever since. Charles Hamilton wrote with Stokely Carmichael a book on Black Power at the very beginning of that movement, and even of that slogan. Roger Wilkins has had a broadly influential career as a civil rights activist, high government official and journalist specializing in urban and minority affairs. Along with Robert Bone, whose *The Negro Novel in America* was among the first books to attempt a systematic survey of black literature in this country, these commentators have at their command a remarkable aggregation of experience in the thrust for black equality. Thus their collective analysis of the black condition, which doesn't pretend to be comprehensive, turns out to be authoritative.

But since this issue does not attempt to cover the pro-

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found and intractable problem in all its aspects, it leaves many questions unanswered. How to reconcile, for example, Herbert Hill's pessimistic prognosis of steadily deteriorating material circumstance with Charles Hamilton's optimistic report of slow but steady progress at the local political level? The contradictions seem due, in part, to the varying time scales the writers employ for their differing diagnoses. McWilliams is encouraged (though not at all complacent) about the contemporary situation, but that is perhaps because his bench marks are the even more depressingly retrograde 1930s, '40s and '50s. Hill, on the other hand, compares the economic conditions of the '70s with those of the '60s and finds cause for alarm and outrage. Roger Wilkins discovers rather an oscillating series of political ups and downs which have left the real issues of racial justice and equality tragically unaddressed.

The common theme: Is it possible—in the wake of so much promise (organizational and individual) unfulfilled, defeated, assassinated and/or disintegrated—to resurrect a movement for social justice? How should one measure the impact of the public disavowal of public promises, the hopelessness born of scandalously high unemployment rates, the ominous loss of faith in the possibilities of politics?

Adding urgency to the situation, in our view, are those many intellectuals and commentators who wholeheartedly supported the civil rights movement of the 1950s and early 1960s, but now find themselves in opposition to the black agenda. Blacks themselves are not directly attacked, but such phrases as "equality of results," "quota system," and "reverse discrimination" frequently smack of euphemism.

In these circumstances it is important to remember, as Christopher Lasch reminded us in discussing McWilliams's early writings in these pages two weeks ago, that the race problem is in part a civil *liberties* issue and that ultimately "its only solution lies in popular action rather than governmentally imposed administrative reforms," important though they are.

This issue of *The Nation*, then, is not merely a necessary, if incomplete, account of the continued shameful situation of a chronically oppressed American minority but also a rededication of the magazine to one of its most fundamental and enduring commitments.

Civil Offense

Civil defense is, of course, *offensive* in the nuclear age, its strategic purpose being to make nuclear war less unthinkable. If by evacuating its cities the United States can "defend" X millions of citizens who would otherwise be consumed in a war, it makes the nuclear "exchange" that much more possible, or likely. Civil defense, so called, frees both superpowers to behave more offensively.

Civil defense is also offensive, in George Orwell's sense of the decent and appropriate use of the language in politics, in that its true significance is the opposite of its apparent (purely defensive) meaning.

Nevertheless, we have been launched by President Carter into a new era of "civil defense." Characteristically, Carter has not made clear the extent of his commitment to this old notion. It has leaked out of the interested parties' lairs in the Pentagon that in late September he approved a "decision memorandum" calling for the development of a thing named "crisis relocation program." A price tag of $2 billion over the next five years was attached to the leak, but the President denies that he has settled on a precise sum.

The phrase "crisis relocation" is so typical of the deceptive jargon of Pentagon bureaucrats that one is tempted to toy with it and twist it into the assertion that the real "crisis" resides in the defense establishment, which should be "relocated" elsewhere, far from the center of national policy.

Common sense assures us that modern cities—and especially American ones choked every working day in their own vehicular traffic—cannot be evacuated short of days and days of chaos. The next immediately following idea is that, if we ever began such a gigantic trek, the adversary-about-to-become-enemy would take it as the clearest signal that we were about to launch our arsenal against him. Would he then politely wait for more evidence? On the contrary, he would have every reason to strike pre-emptively, just when the exodus bottlenecks were most jammed.

This "evacuous" proposal (to recycle *The Economist*'s jesting headline) is but the latest in a series of our civil defense "efforts." Back in Harry Truman's days this grim comedy was all about holes in the ground, backyard shelters, and designated "safe" areas in public buildings. Those symbolic triangles that marked them have faded over the years, but the impulse to hide from the atom has surged and receded with the tides of the confrontational cycle. In his last year in office Truman, trying to squeeze money out of a skeptical Congress, wrote that "every weakness in civil defense increases an aggressor's temptation to attack us" (note the cautious anonymity of that phrase; it is normal now to call it a "Soviet" spade).

John F. Kennedy deplored the public's "apathy, indifference and skepticism" and called for "insurance which we could never forgive ourselves for forgoing in the event of catastrophe" (he must have been talking of the survivors' guilt). But he quickly let the whole civil defense notion drop, even though Robert McNamara called it "absolutely essential," right after the Cuban missile crisis. Congress and the public had no faith in it, trusting instead in their own instincts that a nuclear war would truly be a no-win conflict and therefore would not happen, however much both governments brandished their missiles. We had fully entered the quite sane period that was called MAD for short, meaning that deterrence checked both sides with the knowledge that mutual assured destruction lay down the road.

Thus it is always ominous when a President raises again the specter, for that is what it is, of civil defense. It means that the offensive capability is being geared up a notch or two. In Carter's case the motivation is obviously to appease the Senate's warhawks, as the SALT II treaty nears completion and heads toward ratification. The Soviet Union will not be fooled by it, so why should the American Congress or public be

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taken in by this old charade? In fact, they will not be, but it is always distressing to find that particular skeleton rattling again in the national closet. Civil defense starts a process of offensive posturing which some day might be unstoppable.

Need for a Cause

Something seems to us to be missing from all that we have read on the People's Temple disaster. Many of the accounts and analyses focus on the Rev. Jim Jones in an effort to comprehend how he achieved so great a power over his congregants that he was able to lead them to a jungle in Guyana and then to their deaths. While we are ready to concur in the general judgment that Jones was a megalomaniac with charismatic qualities, he also seems to us less interesting than the men and women of all ages and all races who followed him. They demonstrated an extraordinary communal willingness to work hard and make sacrifices for a cause, ultimately even sacrificing their lives and the lives of their children.

We find them interesting not because we think they were freaks but because we think they may be representative of a great many other Americans who would welcome the opportunity to dedicate themselves to a cause. The power that Jim Jones achieved over them did not emanate from him. It came, we think, from their desire to endow him with qualities deserving of the sacrifices they were prepared to make.

As everyone knows, new religious movements—or "cults," to use the pejorative word—have enjoyed great success in recent years in attracting adherents. Otherwise sane appearing young men and women have worshipped a chubby 15-year-old boy, or shaved their heads and danced in the streets in yellow robes, or revered a Korean munitions manufacturer as the Messiah. Distraught parents have tried to explain such behavior by alleging that their children have been brainwashed. While the doctrines preached by these movements are indeed strange to us, their appeal does not seem very mystifying. It appears to lie in the intense commitment and sacrifices they demand from their adherents at a moment when American society lacks in other causes that impose high demands. If the parents of those joining these movements revile their faiths or threaten them with deprogramming, that may even intensify the attraction. The threat of persecution makes greater the sacrifice required from those who belong.

Just as the new religious movements are flourishing, so are revival movements in established religions. "Born again" Christianity, which calls for sacrificial abstinences, is a powerful force that has appealed to millions of Americans across a spectrum broad enough to include Jimmy Carter, Eldridge Cleaver and Charles Colson. Orthodox Judaism, certainly among the most demanding of faiths, seems also to be growing, if we are to judge by the strength of various Hasidic sects and the number of students on college campuses we see wearing yarmulkes.

The impulse to join with others in making sacrifices on behalf of a cause is not unique to our time. Virtually every religious movement, no matter how well-established and comfortable it may be today, required great sacrifices of its early adherents. Its liturgy memorializes the persecutions endured by its founders and its greatest heroes are its martyrs. Religions also celebrate those scourges who led rebellions against established leaders for indulging too greatly in secular pleasures and who periodically renewed and purified the faith through sacrifice.

Religion, of course, is not the only force capable of providing those who seek it the opportunity to join others in making sacrifices. Some find such opportunities in military service and war, others in political movements, others in humanitarian endeavor. Counterparts of the young men and women who are joining new religious movements today supplied the energy that fueled the civil rights and anti-war movements a decade or so earlier. We who believed in those causes then rejoiced in the intensity of the commitments. We might rejoice again today in the willingness of people to make sacrifices if it were in a cause that we found admirable.

The late 1950s resembled the late 1970s in lacking good causes in which young Americans saw opportunities to join with one another in making sacrifices. Perhaps that is why the response was so immediate and enthusiastic in 1960 when John F. Kennedy proposed the Peace Corps in the course of his campaign to be President. We do not suggest that the time has come to revive that idea. For good reason, Americans have become cynical about causes their government might espouse. But we miss any discussion of ways to attract to good causes those Americans who seek the fulfillment they derive from joining together and making sacrifices. We say this, not because we are ready with our own five- or ten-point program to propose, but because we think some good might yet come out of the events in Guyana if we examined how to appeal to the movement that seems to be out there waiting for a good cause. Those who went to Guyana and died there seem to have thought that preferable to the other ways they could have spent their lives. Only the likes of the Reverend Jones and the Reverend Moon have understood and appealed to their need to sacrifice. Is there no one else around?

ARYEH NEIER

Aryeh Neier, a member of The Nation*'s editorial board, is visiting professor of Law at New York University and a fellow of the New York Institute for the Humanities.*

Carey's Night

We wish that all our readers, and all of that much larger company that wishes Carey McWilliams well, could have been present at *The Nation* dinner on November 29 at the Biltmore Hotel in New York. It celebrated our retired editor and the purposes he served so well for so long; it also looked to the future of this country and how it could be served by a journal of this kind. Here then,

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VARIATIONS

CALVIN TRILLIN

As a lover of truth, I am naturally pleased to see the facts emerging about the prediction attributed to H.L. Mencken concerning the first President from the Deep South. It is gratifying to see yet another confirmation of that old American political adage, usually credited to the late John Foster Dulles, "You can't fool all of the people all of the time, but you might as well give it your best shot."

I suppose what stirred interest in the passage from the start was that, by chance, the First Family Mencken envisioned seemed rather close to our very own First Family—a beer-swilling brother, a cousin on the hallelujah circuit, a daughter taking pictures with her box camera, and an incumbent who, "shorn of his bumpkin ways by some of Grady's New South hucksters, will have a charm comparable to that of the leading undertaker of Dothan, Alabama." Last spring, I reprinted the Mencken quotation in this column—reprinted it routinely, I might add, in the way that American newspapers once routinely reprinted the body count handed out each day by the U.S. Army spokesman in Saigon.

For a while, other publications reprinted the passage as routinely as I had. Then we were faced with what I can only call a backlash. It was led by Georgia state Sen. Julian Bond, whose statesmanlike exterior, I know, has masked a deep sense of frustration and rage ever since he managed, in 1961, to integrate the public tennis courts of Atlanta only to be beaten in straight sets by a female dietitian in her late 50s. Bond himself reprinted the Mencken passage in a column (for the Atlanta *Gazette*) provoking a *Los Angeles Times* investigation of its origin which has not been matched for journalistic enterprise since my own investigation, in the early 1970s, uncovered a conspiracy between Richard M. Nixon and Willard Marriott to consolidate all of the cooking in this country into one gigantic kitchen, to be located somewhere in Virginia.

The *Los Angeles Times* reporter, Jeff Prugh, questioned a number of Mencken scholars, including Alistair Cooke, who put together *The Vintage Mencken* long before he met the Bellamys. According to Prugh's account, Cooke "pored voraciously" over his Mencken collection for nine days, and then concluded that the passage was a "mischievous parody." The tip-off, Cooke said, was the use of the word "pornographer," as in the President's cousin "praying for the conversion of some Northern Sodom's most Satanic pornographer as she waves his work—well thumbed—for all the yokels to gasp at." Informing Prugh that "pornographer" was little used in the 1920s, Cooke offered the opinion that the entire passage may have been invented by Julian Bond.

A few days later, Bond hastened to clear himself by telling the implacable Prugh that the passage may have originated in this column. I had to face up to the implication carried in Bond's words: there was a possibility that the person who passed the quotation on to me, a person I have refused to say was or was not Zbigniew Brzezinski, had taken advantage of my trusting nature. But Bond, like one of those fallen-away Stalinists who immediately start accusing everyone of being an agent of the Red Menace, began writing letters to the editor claiming that I was not what the committee used to dismiss as an "innocent dupe" but the inventor of the quotation myself—a conscious hoaxer of the American people who had been caught at last by the wily Cooke. According to Bond's letters, I had been driven to the deed by my embarrassment at having been snookered many years before by "a story about 'seal boy,' a youth who fell off a boat in the Gulf of Mexico and was raised by porpoises." I was not so much angry as a little bit hurt.

Even that was not the unkindest cut. In writing a review of a book I recently published, my own wife, in this very magazine, implied that I had invented the Mencken quotation—a charge made in direct violation of the rule of evidence that prohibits a wife from testifying against her husband in a journal of opinion. The state of mind my wife was in when she tossed off this calumny can best be described by noting that her review of my book was distinctly unfavorable.

Then, as so often happens in America these days, the truth began to emerge through the efforts of an accountant. Don Harvey, an accountant in Chicago, wrote me to say that "pornographer" was not only used in the '20s but had been used by Mencken himself in 1920 in a *New Republic* article called "Star Spangled Men." If I did not have access to back numbers of *The New Republic*, Harvey said, I could find the same essay reprinted in *The Vintage Mencken*, collected and with an introduction by Alistair Cooke.

This raises a number of questions about Cooke's role. If the Mencken quote is not genuine, why did Cooke try to shift the blame to Julian Bond? Does Cooke know Brzezinski? Does he know Don Harvey? Is it possible that Cooke had something to do with making up the quote and now fears he may be deported if discovered? Is Alistair Cooke an American citizen? If so, why does he talk so funny?

Once the truth began to emerge, it overwhelmed the naysayers and cynics. Only last month, in the course of interviewing a visiting specialist on the subject (me), the Kansas City *Star* finally printed the truth about the seal boy hoax. "The Seal Boy Hoax (a boy who supposedly lived with dolphins in the Gulf of Mexico) was a confusion Bond took for real," the *Star* article said. "He reported it, and then blamed Trillin when the truth was made known."

Recently, I received a letter from John Givens, the news director of WAGF in Dothan, Alabama. "I could dismiss the quote as being a hoax," Mr. Givens wrote. "Instead of that, I asked around town and found that the piece reeks of Mencken's pen and may very well be authentic. Let me explain that H.L. Mencken was very much familiar with Dothan, Alabama . . . ." After listing some of Mencken's Dothan connections and reaffirming his own belief in the quotation, Mr. Givens ends by saying, "I would appreciate some insight to its authenticity." This, Mr. Givens, is it. □

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for those who were not present, is our attempt to convey the spirit and message of that evening.

We will not increase the discomfort of our truly modest honored guest by repeating the tributes paid to him as a man, an editor, a writer and a conscience. They were full but not fulsome, well deserved all. But most of the speakers that night looked forward to the tasks awaiting a journal whose habit it is to challenge conventional thinking and seek to discover what lies beneath the surface of events.

Sen. James Abourezk declared that if "information is the currency of democracy, then America is teetering on the edge of bankruptcy." He noted that most of the press cannot express "outrage or even displeasure" at the "major transgressions" of the American Establishment because "they are part of it and do not profit from criticizing themselves," and that "an informed and irate public will do more to bring about legislative and social change than any amount of legislative finesse and legislative compromise can ever do."

The question, suggested I.F. Stone, a former editor and correspondent of this magazine, is how to extend the reach of such a "nonconformist, radical-liberal" publication, whose very "existence" he called "providential." His proposed solution was to call for "capital grants" that would make it possible to expand the readership and pay our contributors more adequately.

Ralph Nader, unable to be present, sent a letter read by the toastmaster, Studs Terkel, pledging to give ten gift subscriptions if ten people at the dinner would do the same there that night (and, in postscript, promised his ten anyway). And his words about McWilliams applied, we hope, to what we are still trying to do here—that is, to be "at the forefront in reporting the unreported, in thinking the unthinkable and in judging the unjudged."

Clarence Mitchell, that veteran of the battles fought by the NAACP in Washington and elsewhere, saw *The Nation* under McWilliams as "a crystal-clear stream flowing ever in the direction of the right goal" and always avoiding as "counterproductive" those "liberal attacks against other liberals with whom they disagree."

As for Dolores Huerta, great militant of the United Farm Workers Union, she praised the honoree for his "dedication to make justice happen" and ended by leading the audience in a series of rousing *Vivas* for good causes and *Abajos* against oppression, racism and J.P. Stevens by name.

Jules Feiffer drew a picture of what McWilliams stood for, calling it "a special tribute to Carey McWilliams to say that if what's coming up in our future is informed by a man of his directness and clarity, we have a chance for better times." He described him as "a distinguishedly dangerous man."

The whole evening was enlivened and enlightened by Toastmaster Terkel's sparkling comments and also by the stirring songs of Tom Glazer and of the Valdez brothers, Luis and Daniel, who have gone from the stoop labor, whose hardships and injustices McWilliams so often attacked, to successful careers on the stage.

And there were brief, understated (with their strong approval) tributes to the most recent two publishers, George Kirstein and James J. Storrow jr., who between them sustained this journal during the last two decades and thus made its future possible. To Linda Eder Storrow, formerly our associate publisher, who organized this evening through weeks of strenuous labor, the crowd gave a deserved ovation.

And now, with the words and feelings of that moving occasion still fresh in our minds, and with a salute to Carey McWilliams once again, it is to the future that his successors turn with a new dedication and revived spirits.

ARTICLES.

RACE AND LEADERSHIP

The Legacy That Soured

ROGER WILKINS

In late 1967, Richard G. Hatcher, the newly elected Mayor of Gary, Ind., stopped by my Washington office to pay a courtesy call. We were going to talk about how the Johnson administration could help him make Gary a better city. Hatcher was in Gary; Carl Stokes had been elected to the same office in Cleveland. Lyndon B. Johnson was in the White House and liberals in the government were at the controls of the new, sputtering but potentially powerful Great Society. The old Roosevelt coalition had worked. Laws had been passed, blacks had become aroused, the country's conscience had been stirred and we were on the beginning of the march to equality. The 1960s had laid the base and now we were ready to build on it to bring some justice to the poor.

"What do the black militants think of you and your administration?" I asked the mild-mannered Hatcher in that time of Stokely Carmichael and Rap Brown.

"*We* are the militants," Hatcher replied.

"Hot damn," I thought, "smart blacks on the move. With muscle, savvy and luck, in two decades we'll have a decent country."

And why not exult? It had been a long and bloody decade with black folk and their allies marching, singing, fearing, soaring and dying. But we had seen some laws for the South and elections in the North and the beginnings of a comprehensive approach toward everybody's poverty. It was a good and broiling country. I thought. For instance, just look at how Hatcher had gotten in.

Somehow, Carl Holman, deputy staff director of the

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United States Commission on Civil Rights and black, had met this young Gary City Councilman who had expressed his intention to go after the entrenched and not too meticulous Democratic machine in Gary. As the primary was approaching, Hatcher found that the machine was not being very scrupulous about the ways it found to get the votes to beat back his challenge. Hatcher asked Holman to explore the possibility of getting federal assistance to prevent the voting fraud that he feared might cost him the election. Holman called a black friend in the Department of Justice, who in turn prevailed upon Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark to instruct the FBI to investigate. It did, the fraud was stopped in its tracks and Hatcher won the election. Blacks knew how to operate in a federal establishment that was sometimes quite responsive to the appeals from those who were doing new—for blacks—and creative things out in the country. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy were still alive and though there was talk in the press about a white backlash, the country had not yet flinched from the challenge of achieving social justice.

That was a long time ago.

That is not to say that there are not able and influential black people in the communities around the country or in Washington today. It is to say that the advance we have made since those early days in 1968, compared to the advance we expected to make, is woefully and discouragingly small. And it is to say that the hope we had then, compared to the hope we have now, is also woefully small. It is to say that there is no exultation, because there is no reason for it.

How did it go so sour, so fast? And what can black leaders these days do about it? The easy answer to the first question is that Richard M. Nixon came along and, in a mean-spirited way, split all the dreams down the spine. And there is another easy answer: mortality. Kennedy and King were murdered, leaving no people large enough to lead us any more.

I would pose still another answer—certainly not, in all its parts, as easy for me to state. It is that Lyndon Johnson squandered the Roosevelt legacy and left it vulnerable for Richard Nixon's *coup de grace*, a solid kick in the head.

Broad-scale black progress has almost always depended in this country on a dialogue between black people and the White House because, though blacks have always been able to diagnose, and to a large degree prescribe for, the ills inflicted upon them by this society, they have had an extraordinarily hard time getting those messages validated for the general American public in ways that produce effective political action. The problem that blacks have faced in this regard is a denial that is central to American racism. A large portion of the whites in this country do not want—have never wanted—to face how brutally unfair life is, and always has been, for their black fellow countrymen.

Thus, they will advance the flimsiest evidence as proof that life is substantially less unfair than blacks know it to be, and that satisfactory progress is being made. One of the most graphic recent public examples of that kind of denial was the Scammon, Wattenberg, Moynihan thesis of a few years ago that the striking growth of the black middle class warranted a substantially reduced federal role in dealing with racial issues. Another example was the assertion by Nathan Glazer on the *Today* show two years ago that the nation had dealt with the race problem in the 1960s and that it was therefore a thing of the past.

The figures presented by Herbert Hill, in another article in this issue, showing that the gap between the family income of whites in this country and that of blacks is only 2 percentage points smaller than it was thirty-three years ago effectively refutes those arguments. Nevertheless, they have been powerful forces in the formulation of national racial policy over the past ten years.

Blacks have relied, since the era of Franklin Roosevelt, on the "bully pulpit" of the Presidency to overcome the tendency of the white American electorate to indulge in that great, central denial. Blacks have not sought strong Presidential declarations in favor of their cause simply because those speeches made them feel good but because they understood that, without the moral authority of the symbol of national leadership behind their vision of America, they could not hope to mobilize an effective political constituency.

Thus it was not until John F. Kennedy's speeches after the rioting at the University of Mississippi and the church bombings in Birmingham that blacks really began to believe in the sincerity of his adherence to their cause and to hope that he might be an effective ally. And indeed he was, as was Lyndon Johnson in the early stages of his Presidency. Johnson was a true disciple of Roosevelt in that he clearly believed in utilizing fully the power the President has to inspire the nation to undertake great and difficult tasks. He surely used that moral authority to great effect in achieving passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. But then he slopped most of it away on the war in Vietnam and the persuasive force of his office was never recovered.

In addition, in the spring of 1968, when the white American psyche was reeling from the hammer blows of urban riots and the rhetoric of black radicals, Johnson refused to endorse the findings of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders which—in the view of many sophisticated black leaders—was the

NEXT WEEK

Dorothy Samuels and James Goodman of the Committee for Public Justice begin a series of reports for *The Nation* monitoring the selection of 152 new federal judges. Readers are invited to participate by sending local newspaper clippings or personal observations on federal judgeship candidates to the Committee for Public Justice, 22 E. 40 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10016.

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most sophisticated assessment of racial ills ever made by a prestigious national group. Thus, when he left office, Johnson left his purposes and his programs vulnerable to attack. He failed to establish the credibility needed to continue the relatively modest efforts to alleviate the most critical and intractable problems the civil rights movement had brought to public attention. He left no foundation to withstand the erosion of the delicate consensus for social justice that had formed in the mid-1960s.

President Nixon needed no weatherman to tell him the direction of that erosion and he acted upon it. Johnson's behavior in office during the last years of his Presidency had prepared the people to believe Nixon when he characterized and discredited the Great Society by saying it was merely "throwing money at problems." Then Nixon himself further demeaned the bully pulpit by dragging the nation through the long ordeal of Watergate.

Whatever one may think of his instincts or his abilities, it is obvious that one of the things that profoundly limits President Carter's power to deal with such problems as energy and inflation is the depleted moral authority that his predecessors left him. No black who remembers the President's attempt to rally the nation to "the moral equivalent of war," or the skeptical, measured support with which his anti-inflation program was recently greeted, can imagine a rousing and effective civil rights speech coming from the White House today. In September, when Mr. Carter addressed the dinner of the Congressional Black Caucus, he wound up by shouting at the crowd, "Right On!" Thereupon, a woman I know bowed her head, got up and left the room. As she made her way through the tables in the banquet hall, she remarked to a prominent black politician, "All I can do at this point is go to the john."

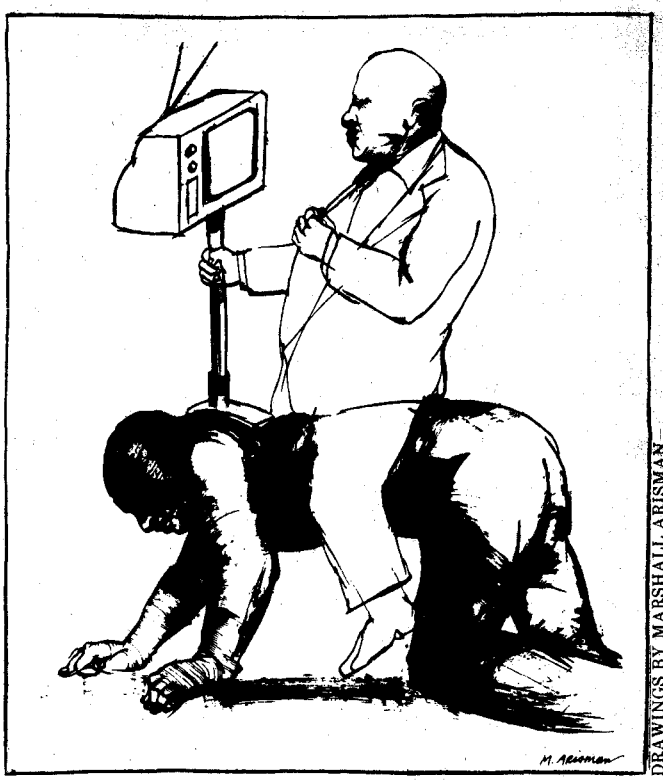
"You're lucky. I'd go and hide too," the politician said. "But they'd probably notice me."

The woman and the politician didn't dislike Carter all that much, and they weren't turned off by his style or even his taste. It was just that he was going right on to nowhere and they knew it.

That leaves black leaders of the late 1970s not between a rock and a hard place but on a desolate triangular plateau formed at its base by white apathy and the virtual impossibility of demonstrating the true condition of the black masses and at its tip by the lack of resonance in the White House.

Blacks still know the realities of Harlem and Watts, but the general collapse of belief in Presidential leadership and the efficacy of government has made Howard Jarvis the prophet of the nation's political future. In that political climate and at a time when white people would rather gauge the black condition by the size of Reggie Jackson's or Diana Ross's income it is almost impossible to get any kind of hearing for the plight of that segment of the young black population that is barely educated and seems utterly excluded from the world of work, perhaps in perpetuity. It costs money, a great deal of it, to provide jobs for the jobless, education for the children of illiterate parents or health care for the elderly poor. Black leaders know this, but in a time when there is a will in the white population to ignore Professor Hill's observation that the portion of black families earning more than $24,000 has *declined* from 12% to 9% from 1972 to 1976, there is no receptivity for the things that they know. Nor is there any possibility of getting a resounding echo out of the White House.

That is not because there is any lack of talented black leadership. On the contrary, this generation of black leaders may be the most sophisticated ever. Hatcher in Gary, Tom Bradley in Los Angeles and Parren Mitchell in Congress, among others, are among the ablest black politicians this nation has ever produced. Vernon Jordan, Jr. of the National Urban League and Jesse Jackson of PUSH are certainly shrewd, tough, intelligent and charismatic leaders. And in Washington, where Clarence Mitchell of the NAACP once stood virtually alone, there is a cadre of seasoned black political operators, led by Carl Holman of the National Urban Coalition and Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund. But nobody much wants to know what they know or to act upon it.



DRAWINGS BY MARSHALL ARISMAN

The other day I left an elegant townhouse on the East Side of Manhattan where the economic future of New York City was being discussed. One of the last speakers had made an eloquent argument that a substantial easing of the tax burden was what was needed to preserve and enhance the economic base of the city. I walked across Central Park after the lunch of light fish and white wine and in the course of that three-block walk the width of the park, I was approached by at least seven black youngsters, who should have been in school at that hour, offering to sell me "loose joints." For the life of me, I couldn't figure out how I could make that educational and economic reality vivid were the conversation in that townhouse to re-

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sume instantly.

And that is what the core of the racial struggle is all about: perceptions of reality and whether the reality of America that blacks know can be made vivid enough to animate the vision, touch the compassion, and unlock the generosity on a subject for which white Americans generally lack those characteristics. But the moral chaos at the end of the Johnson administration has made it easy for the nation to repudiate the realities that his administration was bold enough to stare at and to struggle with. Sadly, few blacks who knew the Johnson of 1964 through 1966, or the Johnson of 1972, just before he died, doubt for an instant that he deeply wanted to achieve racial justice in this country. That is one of his tragedies and it is ours.

But the black leadership that views the current racial desolation in the country is not despairing; it is just sad. It knows that black people are not going to disappear and that one real advance over the last few years is that black children are in college in greater numbers now than ever before. So they figure, with the old philosopher, that "What goes around, comes around." There will be another day. □

FALLING BEHIND AGAIN

White Myths of Black Economics

HERBERT HILL

The celebration of black economic progress is becoming national political ritual. From the frenzied pages of *Commentary*, the headline-making "reports" of Richard Scammon and Ben Wattenberg, the stream of books and articles by Nathan Glazer, Irving Kristol, and their many academic friends, and from a variety of columnists and commentators comes the familiar litany that racist practices have ended, that equality of opportunity has been achieved. Indeed, if there are remaining problems, Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Michael Novack, among others, explain that it is only because of inadequacies within the nonwhite population.

For the ideologues of the new conservatism, this argument serves two ends: it undermines affirmative action and related programs on behalf of nonwhites (if equality is at hand affirmative action is unnecessary), and it supports their attempt to create a new political coalition of reactionary middle-class elements with blue-collar workers and urban ethnics who believe obsessively that blacks receive "special privileges" at their expense.

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Those who proclaim the new-found prosperity of blacks usually ignore some facts, distort others, and, to make their argument, generally choose selective information taken out of the current context. Unfortunately, they are wrong.

An accurate assessment reveals the dismal economic condition—in fact so catastrophic as to require major new federal programs (of the sort suggested below) to combat unemployment.

During the decade of the 1960s, the economic condition of blacks improved significantly. Although unevenly distributed by sex, age and education, important gains were registered. More than any other single category, black women made progress in relative income. This occurred because of their movement from service jobs to clerical and factory work. Black men and women with advanced educational attainment also somewhat closed the gap with highly educated whites. A statistically larger group of black workers earned a strategic place in the industrial labor force and in public service jobs. This development was due in part to the mobility of the white working class out of heavy industry in conjunction with profound changes in the demographic characteristics of black people during the decade of the 1960s.

According to the 1970 census, the majority of blacks had become city dwellers. At the beginning of that decade, almost half of the total black population was living in the North and West, and a majority of the Southern black population was living in the growing industrial regions of the urban South.

At the beginning of the 1970s, 81% of the black population resided in urban areas as compared to 72% of the white population. Furthermore, the black population was considerably younger than the white, especially in the prime working-age groups. Significantly, the black population grew at a faster rate than the white population in the ten-year period between 1960 and 1970. The rate for blacks was 20%, for whites 12%.

An important consequence of this black population growth was the increase in nonwhite participation in the labor force. Black workers constituted at least one-fifth of the increase in the labor force between 1964 and 1970. As a result of changing demographic and occupational patterns a new black working class emerged, concentrated in basic industry and in the service occupations, especially in the public sector. For example, the rapid expansion of the black labor force in Detroit auto factories during this period was nothing short of dramatic.

At the beginning of the 1970s black family income for the nation was 61% of white family income, but since 1970, the trend of the 1960s has reversed. By 1976, black family income had declined to 59%, where it hovers today.

It should be noted that in a majority of black families, two or more persons must work to bring in the same number of dollars that one wage earner produces for the white family. According to a Bureau of the Census study, "the income of the average Negro family with three wage earners is not significantly different from the family income of the average white family with one earner."

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The rate of economic improvement was not consistent over a thirty-year period; it fluctuated from year to year. Black family income first reached 57% of white family income in 1945; it dropped thereafter and rose again in 1952 to 57%, climbed to 61% in the early 1970s and is again falling. Furthermore, much of the modest improvement was in large part the result of the great shift of the black rural population to urban areas, not because discriminatory patterns had been eliminated.

Another indication of the erosion of past gains is that the proportion of black families earning $24,000 and up has steadily declined in recent years: from 12% in 1972 to 9% in 1976. Meanwhile, the proportion of black families with incomes between $16,200 and $24,000 has remained constant, at about 25%. These findings dispute the claim that there is a growing "black middle class."

Black workers who obtained industrial employment during the 1960s now find themselves locked in patterns of occupational segregation that make them more vulnerable than any other group to layoffs during periods of recession, and at other times prevent promotion to more desirable jobs. The adage about black workers being "the last hired and the first fired" is a harsh reality and, for this group especially, unemployment is eroding the 1960s progress.

The erosion of past economic gains is further demonstrated by two major indicators—poverty rates and unemployment data—which reveal the deteriorating economic condition of blacks. Blacks now constitute 30% of those living in poverty, about three times their proportion of the total population. Less than one-third of white families headed by females live in poverty, but more than half of the families headed by nonwhite women have incomes below the government definitions of poverty. During the first quarter of 1978, according to official statistics, 44.8% of the black population lived in poverty areas, compared with only 8.3% of the white population; 23.5% of blacks lived in central city poverty as contrasted with 2.5% of whites.

The second indicator of the black condition is unemployment. At the peak of the 1975 recession, the black unemployment rate was 1.7 times the white rate. The rate had risen to 2.3 times that for whites by the first half of 1978.

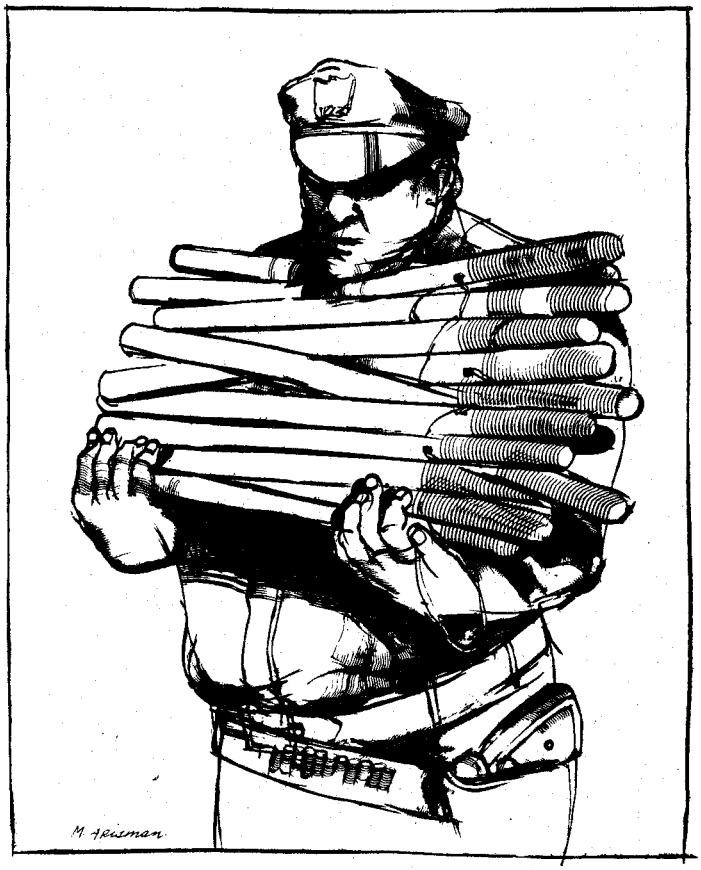
During July, the official unemployment rate for whites was 5.2%, for blacks 12.5%. And that has been a consistent pattern for a large part of the black community which has been in a condition of chronic recession for at least twenty years. Black unemployment has not been under 6% at any time during the past two decades and, except for 1968 and 1969, black jobless rates have not been under 7%. Between 1955 and 1975, blacks had an average unemployment rate of 9.2%, and with little fluctuation the official unemployment rate of blacks was more than double that for whites.

The highest rate of unemployment exists among black youth. For more than twenty years, the official jobless figure for this group fluctuated around 40%, but in many ghetto areas it now far exceeds the official statistical rate. Most analysts believe that the real unemployment rate for young urban blacks is closer to 60%. In past years the disproportionately large number of blacks drafted into the armed forces served to hide the true unemployment rate among black youth. Furthermore, the official figure does not include the many who have become too discouraged to seek work, nor does it cover the large number of underemployed, such as casual workers.

A recent study made within the inner city of Milwaukee more accurately reflects the condition typical in many black census tract areas. It was found that among all inner-city blacks 18 years and older, only 42% were employed; the comparable figure for metropolitan area whites was more than 75%. In the 18-to-24 age bracket, the period when lifetime career goals are usually shaped, only 29% of the blacks held jobs. In Milwaukee and throughout the nation, white high school dropouts are still more likely to find jobs than black high school graduates.

Since the mid-1950s, the official unemployment rate among urban black youth increased from one and a half to three times the white rate and has now reached crisis proportions. To grasp the implications of the situation, it should be noted that during the Great Depression of the 1930s mass unemployment never exceeded 25%, but the official fourth-quarter 1975 unemployment rate for black inner-city teen-agers was 43.2%, and this condition continues.

It is evident that a permanent black underclass has developed, that virtually an entire second generation of ghetto youth will never enter into the labor force. This means that a large part of the young black urban



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population will remain in a condition of hopelessness and despair, and that the social and psychological costs in wasted lives continues a major tragedy in American life. This is the most volatile single source of potential urban disorder.

It is clear that government-funded activities such as the poverty program, Model Cities, CETA and the Apprenticeship Outreach Programs, among others, have failed to reach this group. The training and jobs programs begun in the early 1960s, such as those conducted under the Manpower Development and Training Act, at best could only provide temporary relief from unemployment, and usually for those who would have obtained short-term jobs in any event. Only a very small number of ghetto youth participated in the government-sponsored programs of the past twenty years. Black participation was concentrated in programs that led to low-paid, unskilled jobs in declining industries. From MDTA to CETA, black youth learned little or nothing that prepared them for entering into expanding sectors of the economy.

What is urgently required is the development of long-term policies designed specifically for ghetto youth, not contingent upon full employment in the economy at large. The complex and accumulated problems of black ghetto youth cannot be solved by anti-bias measures or by an expanding economy.

A new comprehensive federal strategy directed specifically at nonwhite youth living in ghetto areas is essential. Among the several component parts of such a strategy would be the creation of a National Youth Service Corps, with funding guaranteed for at least ten years.

Those enlisted in the National Youth Service Corps would receive training related to actual work requirements and realistically connected to labor market needs, in contrast to present apprenticeship and other vocational training programs. After a preparatory period, recruits would be guaranteed a job and income over a stated period and would be employed in a variety of useful tasks in both public and private sectors. They could provide many services required by communities through public works as well as through private employment. A special youth exemption from the federal minimum wage law will be essential, even if vigorously opposed by organized labor as might be expected. If we are to avert disaster, this and other perhaps even more drastic measures will be necessary.

There is a deceptive calm in the black ghettos. The current racial situation contains within it the potential for widespread violent eruptions. The condition of black people is again declining, and for many in poverty areas is already more desperate than it was during the most serious riots of the 1960s. As in the past, social and economic forces will generate ghetto rebellions that may require us to regard the disorders of the 1960s as mere prelude.

After the riots of the 1960s, there was a rush of investigating commissions to study the causes of the ghetto violence of that period. Among these were the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, known as the Kerner Commission, the McCone Commission in Los Angeles, the Hughes Commission in Newark, and other such groups in Detroit, Cleveland and Rochester. Each of these commissions was charged to examine the causes of the riots and to make recommendations for the prevention of such occurrences. In each and every city, unemployment as a way of life for ghetto youth was found to be a major factor in causing the riots. But white America prefers not to remember the grim warnings of these reports. The powerful institutions of the society are again doing business as usual, and we can predict with a high degree of certainty what the national and local commissions studying the civil disorders of the 1980s will be saying about the relationship of youth unemployment to urban violence. □

BLACKS IN THE SYSTEM

Finding A Reason to Vote

CHARLES V. HAMILTON

Certainly, one of the most dramatic indications of black progress in a decade has been the increase in the number of black elected officials around the country. This has taken place in the North and the South, especially in the latter region since the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

From 1970 to 1977, the total number of black elected officials increased from 1,300 to 4,311, mostly in local governing bodies. Blacks are running for and being elected to public office in a range of positions from Congressional seats to mayoral posts to local school boards, as well as to state legislatures. It is still the case that such candidates have greater likelihood of success in predominantly black districts, but that is what one would expect.

It is important to understand this phenomenon in its historical context. In the South, until the 1960s, the ability of blacks to vote, not to mention run for office, was not something to be taken for granted. In fact, a significant part of the traditional civil rights movement was the long, tedious struggle in the courts to overcome legal and extralegal racial barriers to exercising the franchise. Grandfather clauses in state constitutions, white primaries, obstructionist tactics by voter registrars, gerrymandering were all devices that blacks had to spend a great deal of time and talent fighting. Thus, while some ethnic groups could come to this country and begin at once to develop political skills and master the art of precinct organization, blacks devote their resources to finding plaintiffs and arguing the meaning of the 15th Amendment.

The vote was seen by many, if not as a panacea, certainly as designed specifically for the alleviation of

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many grievances. One is reminded of the perhaps overly optimistic language of Martin Luther King, Jr. in his "Give us the ballot" speech of May 17, 1957. In addition, it can be argued that the *right* to vote was a symbol of citizenship status, and that until it was achieved, a group could hardly be considered first class.

This was not the case, of course, in the North where the problem was not the *right* to vote but the *reason* to vote. In some instances, it was not entirely evident that black voting "made any difference." In all too many instances, white candidates were not particularly responsive to the needs of their black constituencies. If de jure segregation prevailed in the South, manifest conditions of de facto segregation and discrimination characterized the North. To be sure, where blacks voted in the North, they frequently were able to get a certain number of patronage jobs and similar kinds of divisible benefits. But the vote was hardly able to make a dent on discriminatory housing markets or on employment practices in the private sector. These things were beyond the scope (or certainly the agenda) of electoral politics.

The steadily increasing Southern black electorate *was* able to change the conversation (if not always the conduct) of Southern politics. White officials came to recognize that in many places the traditional race-baiting rhetoric of an earlier time was no longer politically profitable. Thus, in the early 1970s a new crop of white Southern Governors, especially, developed. One recalls the inauguration language of Gov. Jimmy Carter in 1970: "Segregation is dead." Reubin Askew of Florida and Dale Bumpers of Arkansas replaced hard-line segregationists.

In time, blacks became sheriffs in rural Southern counties, and the atmosphere of racially discriminatory law enforcement was changed. Blacks became mayors of big and little cities (Atlanta, Richmond, New Orleans, Prichard and Tuskegee in Alabama). and they became probate judges and members of county commissions and school boards. These changes were important psychologically as well as factually, because, in a real sense, they signaled success. Limited, incremental to be sure, but in a correct historical understanding of the protracted nature of the human rights struggle they were nonetheless important. They were important if only because they showed that blacks *could* mount and maintain a successful struggle, one without precedent in the American political experience.

And these developments meant also that from then on blacks would have to spend more time developing precinct captains rather than plaintiffs. They would have to concentrate on building effective local political organizations, learn how to mobilize voters and get them to the polls. This required a new rhetoric and style of politics; above all, it meant that another level of understanding the constraints of electoral politics would have to be grasped. That is, blacks could (and did) elect mayors of Atlanta and of Newark, but the economic conditions of the central cities were not altered thereby. It meant that, in some instances, entrenched bureaucracies would replace obstinate voter registrars as the adversaries to be overcome; that blacks would have to bargain with downtown business interests and with federal government officials over proposals for urban aid and redevelopment.

On the national level, in Presidential elections especially, black voters since 1936 have been preferring the Democratic candidate. Black loyalty to the Democratic Party is one of the strongest on the American political scene. And enough, surely, has been written by now about the contribution of blacks to President Carter's election in 1976. If one were to isolate the *major* black expectation from a Carter administration, I suspect it could be summed up in one word: "jobs." Not patronage jobs or high-level appointments—in today's environment, those are rather certain to come. But "jobs" for the vast, chronically unemployed black masses. The Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment and Balanced Growth Bill became one of the top priority items for the Congressional Black Caucus. After considerable wrangling, modification and compromise, a bill was signed into law in October 1978. It was substantially less forceful than the bill that started out in 1971 from Rep. Augustus Hawkins's subcommittee, but several black spokesmen apparently felt obliged to endorse it as a significant piece of legislation. In fact, it was basically a statement of policy goals, with no new commitment of funds to create jobs.

It is probably correct to say that the new crop of black elected officials has been most visible at the local mayoral level. Whenever a black mayor is elected, the occasion gets some notice in the national press, especially when it involves a rather large urban area. That was the case most recently in the election of Ernest Morial in New Orleans. In some places, black mayors are now serving their second terms (Maynard Jackson in Atlanta, Thomas Bradley in Los Angeles, Coleman Young in Detroit) and even their third terms (Kenneth Gibson in Newark, Richard Hatcher in Gary). Given the crucial position of the cities and their desperate economic situations, those victories warrant close consideration.

Wherever black mayoral candidates have run and won, the black vote has been relatively high and has gone overwhelmingly for the black candidate. Ernest Morial captured about 20% of the white vote and close to 96% of the black vote. Young attracted 95% of the black vote in his bid for re-election in 1977, and the same was true for Jackson. Blacks turned out in Atlanta at a rate of 47.2% to the whites' 37.1%, Jackson receiving approximately 93.2% of the black vote and, in a candidate field of seven, 19.5% of the white vote.

Doubt has been expressed as to the value of blacks becoming executive leaders of cities that are obviously strapped for money. "They are taking over economic shells, dying entities," is the refrain. Perhaps so, but the picture is unrealistically bleak. The cities will continue to make very important decisions about the allocation of what resources they *do* control. A recent study shows that in cities with black mayors, it appears that expenditures for education and social services were significantly increased over cities without black mayors. Thus, although most black mayors can

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only marginally affect the apportionment of city budgets, to the extent that they are able, they seem to direct the money toward the greatest needs of the poorer communities.

Other evidence also suggests that black mayors tend to be more concerned about developing and installing affirmative action programs, particularly in such municipal agencies as Police and Fire Departments. Under Coleman Young, Detroit instituted what amounted to a quota system for hiring future policemen; it is now in the courts, a suit having been initiated by the local police benevolent association. A lawyer for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, representing the city, suggested the likelihood of more such affirmative action plans for municipal hiring in cities where black political leadership was evident.

It seems reasonably clear that the dramatic increase in the number of black elected officials has had some effect, North and South, on the lives of blacks. It has been felt particularly in the areas of a fairer law-enforcement system (as in some Southern places), greater consideration for a share of available resources, more attention from federal governmental agencies (especially during a Democratic administration: most black elected officials are Democrats and have easier access to a Democratic bureaucracy). This increased black political presence in public office has *not* meant a reversal of the basic conditions of economic disparity between blacks and the larger society. For that to occur, far more will have to happen in the American political system.

Black mayors will be no more able than white mayors to avoid making painful budgetary cuts that are likely to reduce essential municipal services and social benefits. Neither can they, simply because they are black, stem the flow of industry from the central cities (particularly in the Northeastern and Midwestern regions), with resultant shrinking tax bases. About all that can be said—and under the circumstances, this in itself might be considerable—is that the presence of black urban leadership demonstrates that in some places blacks are willing to assume the political challenge of managing our urban systems during critical times of shrinkage and austerity.

They are not coming to power and prominence at a time of expansion and affluence. But that does not mean that a better strategy would argue in favor of waiting. Their leadership will, of necessity, require a new level of political education for their expectant poor constituencies. In earlier years, the civil rights struggle was reasonably clear-cut, with relatively unconfused goals of ending de jure segregation and discrimination; now the situation is more complex. Whereas in the past, bargaining and compromising have been suspect styles of black political leadership and action, such will likely be standard practice in the future. Black constituents who elected their own must now remain mobilized to contend with their own for what they see as their fair share of a shrinking pie. Election to office is not a panacea; it is only the beginning of a process.

In addition, the results in the November off-year elections indicate that black voters should worry about the persisting low levels of black voter turnout. One black Southern activist commented: "There's apathy now among all voters as far as candidates go, and I'm afraid blacks are as guilty of that as anyone." Blacks still register and vote less (by as much as 15%) than whites in many places. In some of them, even where black candidates were running, blacks were not sufficiently enthusiastic to vote in overwhelming numbers. This picture is mixed, which indicates that a number of factors are operating: the personalities of the candidates, the salience of issues, the extent of organizational effort.

In other words, in some instances, blacks are beginning to behave much like their white counterparts, who have always been able to vote. It is both understandable and disturbing. If potential black voters do not perceive a relationship between the process and the product, they are not moved to participate. The burden then is on the leadership to politicize their constituencies. Blacks must be shown that, although the fruits of their participation may not be immediately realized, they must nonetheless persist in it. This holds no less true for the ballot than it did for decades of tedious struggle to *achieve* the ballot.

The education will not be achieved by court decrees or government grants or episodic demonstrations. It requires laborious work at the grass roots. And if the benefits (such as they *may* be) are slow in coming, it simply means that the task is that much more difficult, not that it should be abandoned.

I am reminded of the language of Martin Luther King, Jr. one year before his assassination:

> We made easy gains and we built the kind of organi-

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> zations that expect easy victories, and rest upon them .... Yet in candor and self-criticism it is necessary to acknowledge that the tortuous job of organizing solidly and simultaneously in thousands of places was not a feature of our work .... We unconsciously patterned a crisis policy and program, and summoned support not for daily commitment but for explosive events alone ....We will have to build far-flung, workmanlike and experienced organizations in the future if the legislation we create and the agreements we forge are to be ably and zealously superintended. We shall have to have people tied together in a long-term relationship instead of evanescent enthusiasts who lose their experience, spirit and unity because they have no mechanism that directs them to new tasks.

This admonition is as true today as it was ten years ago. Allies in the struggle to desegregate Southern lunch counters might not be available to desegregate a Northern residential neighborhood. Allies in the struggle to overthrow obstinate Southern voter registrars might not be available to pursue affirmative action strategies in Northern urban bureaucracies. *This is both the reality of self-interest and the reason for greater self-reliance.*

We are likely to hear more in the near future about the strategy of blacks switching their votes to the Republican Party. "We are being taken for granted by the Democrats," some have concluded, and it is certainly true that the "right kind" of Republican can attract black votes. (Sen. Charles Percy of Illinois is an example.) In fact, we have seen in some places that blacks are learning to use their votes in a more pragmatic, instrumental way. However, the prospects for mass black defection to the Republican Party remain slim, as long as the party maintains essentially conservative economic positions on such items as full employment and social services. Poll data show that blacks, more than any other identifiable group, continue to support economically liberal, fiscally activist policies. Little noticed, but certainly existing—among both middle- and low-income blacks—was the substantial black vote *against* Proposition 13 in the California election last June.

If there is disappointment with President Carter over his recent pronouncements about social service cuts, then the agenda calls for persistent engagement, not for pessimistic alienation. The important thing—and this is part of the political education—is to make sure that the support is based on demands clearly expressed and responses clearly made. Whoever receives the black vote should be held accountable for the gift. Otherwise, instead of being "taken for granted," the blacks might simply end up "being taken."

Finally, the electoral process in American politics makes no lasting promises. Brooke (for re-election as Senator) in Massachusetts; Dymally (for re-election as Lieutenant Governor) and Burke (for state Attorney General) in California were all defeated, and many blacks were disappointed. But a black woman won her race for Secretary of State in Wisconsin; a black was re-elected Secretary of State in Michigan, and another as Treasurer in Connecticut.

In 1973, Maynard Jackson, the black Mayor of Atlanta (re-elected to a second term in 1977) stated: "Anyone looking for the civil rights movement in the streets is fooling himself. Politics is the civil rights movement of the 1970s. Politics is the last nonviolent hurrah." That is probably the case; it is certainly the challenge. □

MILESTONES OF CIVIL RIGHTS

Halfway on The Long Walk

CAREY McWILLIAMS

Blacks have good reason to be impatient and critical over their present economic and social status. Black unemployment rates are high, particularly among teen-agers in urban areas, the ghettos are still ghettos, and housing is in critical need. In a retrospective view of Watts after the riots of 1965, *Business Week* (August 14, 1971) reported "no progress." Problem solvers had poured into the area after the riots, which cost $40 million in property damage and took thirty-four lives, and, for a time, Watts became a workshop in urban affairs. But six years later, said the magazine, "the plight of the Los Angeles ghettos is, if anything, bleaker than before the riots." Ten years after the riots, the *Los Angeles Times* sent a team of investigative reporters into Watts to find out what if any improvements had been made. Their conclusion, in a report appropriately captioned "A Ghetto Is Slow to Die" (March 23, 1975), was that "little had changed ... and many things are worse."

Similar reports might be cited for other areas. But while these reports are accurate enough—and may even minimize the deplorable status of ghetto residents—they do not measure or reflect the significant progress blacks and other racial and ethnic minorities have made in the area of civil rights. The importance of these gains should not be exaggerated, but neither should they be brushed aside. Their achievement represents a halfway mark on the long walk into the future. To appreciate what has been gained and what remains to be accomplished, it is necessary to take a brief look at the evolution of the civil rights movement, phases of which have already been forgotten although they happened "only yesterday."

The movement did not spring out of nowhere; it was preceded by some significant if largely forgotten happenings. I would place the inception of the movement in the years of World War II. As late as 1940, the extent of legal, that is, formal, discrimination against blacks was extensive in the North and West as well as in the South. Distinguished black scholars and artists, to say nothing of ordinary men and women, were humiliated by being denied access to places of public accommodation. Miscegenation statutes were nearly universal. Neither major political party was willing to raise the issue of discrimination or to adopt a civil rights pro-

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gram. Both parties, in fact, systematically ignored the issue. The New Deal, for all its merits, was not directly concerned with civil rights; Roosevelt had to do business with Southern Senators on broad economic issues of economic reform. Not only did he feel that he could not risk antagonizing them by proposing measures of specific assistance to blacks but in fact he did not sense the importance of such measures. It took the threat of a march on Washington to secure the issuance of a wartime Executive FEPC Order. Not until Hitler began to stress racial issues as wartime propaganda did American social scientists come of age, so to speak, and begin to re-examine some of the outmoded and ridiculous theories that then prevailed about race and racial differences. But wartime pressures, the need for manpower, and Nazi propaganda combined to force us, as a nation, to rethink some phases of "the race problem." Even as late as 1941, the West Coast aircraft plants employed almost no blacks, but in the wake of the 1943 race riots—in Los Angeles, Detroit, Beaumont, Harlem and elsewhere—a new organized "conscience" began to emerge, North and South, for the first time since Reconstruction. In the last years of the war, blacks made significant progress in employment, and achieved a more typical national distribution. The membership of the NAACP showed a sharp increase. Then, in 1944, the Supreme Court struck down the all-white primaries.

The removal of the West Coast Japanese, citizens and aliens alike, to confinement in "relocation centers," had the paradoxical effect of stimulating a new interest in racial discrimination. Not only was this wartime action in flagrant violation of constitutional rights; it was also cited by Nazi and Japanese propagandists as a prime example of American race prejudice. Similarly, such incidents as the Sleepy Lagoon Murder Case (1942) and the Zoot Suit Riots (1943) in Los Angeles proved to be acute wartime embarrassments to the federal government, since Mexico had declared war against the Axis and was our ally. As a result of these and other like happenings, a significant ferment developed to eliminate racially discriminatory barriers, such as Jim Crow regulations, and to focus national public attention on the way racial minorities were treated. Programs that were prepared and discussed had as their objective the outlawing of all forms of legally sanctioned racial discrimination. More important, civic unity groups began to be formed in scores of cities for the purpose of enacting such programs. More than 500 civic unity councils came into being shortly after the 1943 riots. Such important organizations as the California Federation for Civic Unity, the Southern Regional Council, and the American Council on Race Relations were all formed in 1944. Dr. Charles Johnson, one-time president of Fisk University, and his associates prepared a report in 1943, "To Stem This Tide," which details much of this wartime activity and points to the gains that were achieved. Indeed the nation was well on the way to launching, for the first time, a truly *national* movement aimed at eliminating the more obvious forms of racial discrimination.

And then something happened: the cold war got underway—as early as 1945, even before the peace treaties were signed—and the wartime ferment on racial issues gave way to national concern with "anti-Communist" phobias of one sort or another. If the cold war had not been launched when it was, if Willkie and Roosevelt had not died when they did, it is quite possible that the awakening of the war years might have continued after 1945 and civil rights would have been made a national issue. But this did not happen. Agitation against racial discrimination did not entirely cease, but the wartime urgency was gone. The failure of an attempted filibuster on proposed FEPC legislation marked the end of the wartime chapter. For a decade after 1945 the issue of civil rights was more or less dormant, as Joseph McCarthy stormed up and down the land, ranting and raving about "Reds," "pinkos" and "subversives."

But during the war, something had happened that was to be of critical importance to the emergence of the civil rights movement. The fervor of those years had spread to the South where a few white liberals—by no means all—began to make common cause with blacks who had been stirred to a new militancy by wartime slogans and activities, and stimulated by actual gains that had been achieved. Until the South was willing to march in tandem with the rest of the country on the issue of civil rights it was impossible to launch a *national* movement. It was, therefore, both historically appropriate and politically fortunate that the civil rights movement actually arose in the South.

It began, in a sense, with the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown* v. *the Board of Education* of May 17, 1954. The fact that the decision was unanimous was of major importance; it added immeasurably to its impact. The decision made civil rights a truly national issue because it raised the practical problems of implementation and enforcement. At the time, the decision aroused less opposition than one might have anticipated, perhaps because the Court did not hand down its second decision in the case until a year later when the phrase "with all deliberate speed" was first used. The decision had been a long time coming. The "separate but equal" doctrine of *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* (1896) had put a stop, for the time being, to efforts to enforce the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments—the civil rights Amendments of the Civil War—which, on racial issues, had become historical relics.

The *Brown* decision raised but left unanswered the question of enforcement. If blacks had certain rights, then they could hardly be criticized for insisting that these rights be respected throughout the nation, in every region. The timing was excellent. McCarthy had been censured, the witch hunt showed signs of abating, and people were looking for something that resembled a national purpose worthy of their support. So when Mrs. Rosa Parks refused to move back in the bus in Montgomery, Ala. on December 1, 1955, the bus boycott was on and the civil rights movement had begun.

A year later, on December 13, 1956, the Supreme Court struck down the Montgomery ordinance requiring segregated seating on city buses. In that year the

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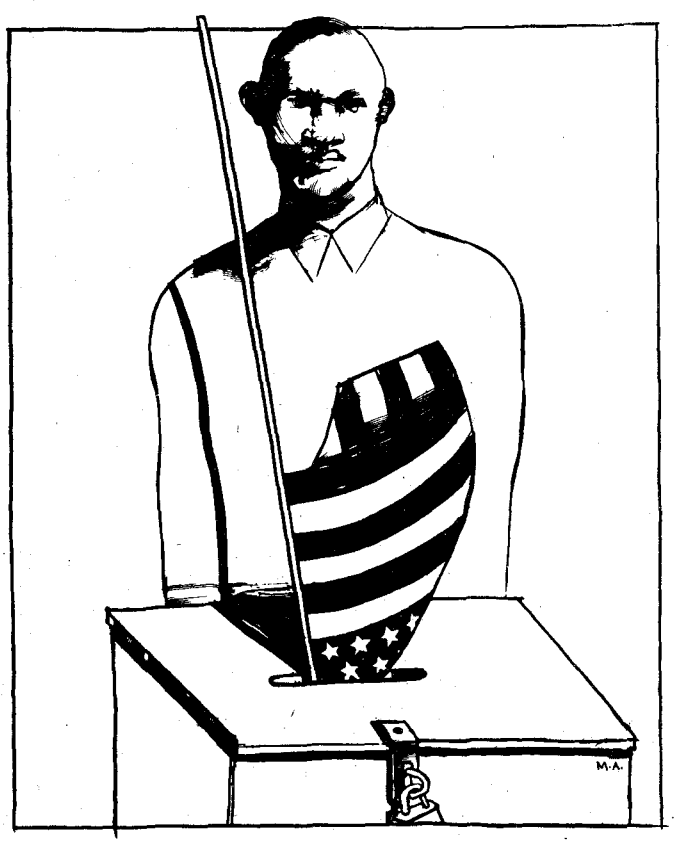
bus boycott had inspired a remarkable national response. It was ideal material for television cameras, what with the marching and singing and hand clapping, and people responded with enthusiasm. Dr. King's leadership, with his remarkable voice, presence and oratorical skills, and his studied emphasis on nonviolence, could not have been more appropriate or praiseworthy. In the heart of the old Confederacy something like a "miracle" had occurred, one that touched the memory, heart and conscience of the nation. Of major importance to the success of the bus boycott was the assistance of such former New Dealers as Clifford Durr, Aubrey Williams and other white liberals. But the blacks of Montgomery, all 50,000 of them, were entitled to most of the credit; they made the boycott a winning issue by their courageous, disciplined, nonviolent protest. And in doing so they set the civil rights movement in motion.

For a decade the civil rights agitation was of prime national concern and interest. From 1955 to 1965 it held the spotlight of national attention and some highly significant gains were scored. But the movement began to sputter out with the Watts riots of 1965, which in turn coincided with the escalation of the war in Vietnam. From then on, television cameras focused on the peace marches, college sit-ins and anti-war demonstrations that resulted in the withdrawal of the last U.S. troops in Vietnam in the late spring of 1975.

The assassination of Dr. King was a tragic postscript to the civil rights movement, for by then it had achieved its major objectives. The struggle for civil rights was not a social revolution. It had limited objectives, though objectives of critical importance. Legal barriers and discriminations had to be removed before more significant progress could be made. In effect, real meaning had to be given to the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments before the march toward racial equality could move on into other areas. This limited objective was largely achieved with passage of the omnibus Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. By 1968 more than a million new black voters had been registered; by 1977 the number of blacks holding elective office had increased from 1,835 to 4,311. Blacks were even serving as sheriffs in a few Southern counties. True, this does not represent quite the gain one might think. Blacks still hold less than 1% of the nation's more than 520,000 elective offices, although they constitute 11% or more of the population. In 1978 only sixteen of 435 members of Congress were blacks and only one black served in the Senate. But more blacks were appointed to judicial and other offices and both major parties began to seek black support at the polls. These gains cannot be reversed. With a solid base of power in electoral politics, the black minority's political influence will increase. Restrictive covenants have been ruled unconstitutional; miscegenation statutes are a thing of the past; segregation in the armed services has been virtually eliminated. Most Jim Crow racial barriers have been repealed or declared unconstitutional. Jim Crow signs in public places and facilities have vanished. Blacks today can travel from coast to coast, by train, bus or plane, stay in hotels or motels of their choice, and patronize restaurants they select without discrimination. Social intercourse and exchanges between blacks and whites have significantly increased. Culturally, there have been many changes: blacks and other minorities are appearing in new roles and relationships in films, theatre and TV (including commercials). Educational barriers have been lowered; colleges and universities are sensitive to their responsibilities and seek to enroll blacks, Chicanos and other minorities.



The civil rights phase is, of course, only one chapter in the history of the struggle for equal rights, but its importance should not be minimized. As A.I. Cooper, of Prichard, Ala., chairman of the Black Conference of Mayors, said recently: "The sweet flush of victory" has now given way to a realization that "a lot of drudgery and hard work" lie ahead. Of course blacks are disappointed that more significant achievements have not resulted; they expected all the barriers would fall once the legal restrictions had been eliminated. But the power structure knows how to manipulate voters. "The thing is pernicious," comments Lisle Carter, president of the University of the District of Columbia and a member of the board of the National Urban League. "First, the white community decides who is the top black spokesman and then it begins to tell him what it is he should say and how he should say it. That's really not very different from what people were always trying to do with those black spokesmen in those little Southern towns back before the civil rights movement" (*The New York Times*, November 22, 1977). Quite true; but some of the criticism must fall on the black leadership. Eager to attain middle-class status, some of them have accepted and then forgotten the

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group they were supposed to represent. Certainly the real work lies ahead, as figures on the number of "black and brown" prisoners in American prisons, and statistics on minority unemployment, welfare and substandard housing clearly indicate. But the gains scored by the civil rights movement are real and irreversible. Now blacks must build coalitions and alliances not merely with other minorities but with the white working class, the white lower-middle class and elements of the white middle class to recapture that power that has been permitted to concentrate in corporate board rooms. To be blunt about it, blacks have not used political leverage as effectively as they might. In California, for example, there has not been much cooperation between blacks and Chicanos; combined, these two minorities could exert much greater influence than either now exercises. Chicanos are the largest minority in the state and will surely play a major role in the state's political future, but to date blacks have offered little cooperation although they enjoy higher average educational ratings and economically are a rung or two above Mexican-Americans. With excellent organization and astute leadership, Japanese-Americans have made significant political gains both on the West Coast and in Hawaii. But while progress seems to lag, the civil rights movement did lay a foundation for the future by implementing the Civil War Amendments—a century after their adoption.

Roger Wilkins sums up the civil rights chapter admirably: "Ten years after the Kerner Commission issued its report, forecasting the development of 'two societies, one black, one white—separate but equal,' there is much disappointment and some disillusionment in America's black community. But the picture is not entirely bleak. There has been quiet, steady progress, not only in areas in which new institutions have been established to assist in the quest for social justice but also in areas in which changes unimagined two decades ago have dramatically altered the face of American society" (*New York Times*, March 6). □

Getting Down to Cases...

'Like a Checker on A Checkerboard'

MARC LEVINSON

Atlanta, Ga.

Earl Charles is a serious, intense young man of 25. His intensity, one guesses, comes from spending three years in jail, under a death sentence, for a crime he did not commit. In mid-July, Charles was suddenly freed, a bizarre ending to a bizarre case that illustrates—whatever the merits of Andrew Young's "political prisoners" statement—serious faults in the American criminal justice system.

Charles, a native of Savannah, Ga., moved to Tampa, Fla. in September 1974, taking a job at a gas station. On October 3, Savannah furniture merchant Max Rosenstein and his son, Fred, were brutally slain during a robbery at their downtown store. A paid informer apparently told Savannah police that street talk said Charles had done it. A warrant was promptly issued; Charles was picked up as a "suspicious person" in Florida and then, to his surprise, charged with the murders.

"They didn't stop to interrogate me to see what I had to say in my defense," Charles says of the police who arrested him. "Maybe I could have said something to convince them. I'm the one being charged, but they looked at me like I was a spectator in my own case. I was like a checker on a checkerboard."

In December 1974, Earl Charles was extradited to Georgia. The principal witness against him was the bookkeeper at the furniture store, who had seen the murders. She had originally failed to recognize Charles's photo when police showed it to her. Later, she identified both Charles and a man who had been in a Florida prison at the time of the killings, but she fingered Charles only after detectives told her they were going to arrest him anyhow. Nonetheless, her testimony at the trial outweighed the time cards, rent receipts and testimony by Charles's Florida boss which were introduced to prove that he had been at work hundreds of miles away at the time of the killings. A jury of ten whites and two blacks convicted him on May 15, 1975. He was sentenced to die.

Like half the seventy-two people on death row in Georgia, Earl Charles is black. Like three-quarters of them, he was under 25 when sentenced. Like 81% of the victims, the people he had allegedly murdered were white. There was only one significant difference between Earl Charles and the average inmate on Georgia's death row: Charles has a family which believed in him, and which owned a house that was mortgaged for money to hire an attorney. Without the house, Charles would have been represented by a court-appointed attorney whose fee—from $50 to $150, plus up to $500 for investigative costs, all at the discretion of the court—would have made a long, stubborn defense impossible.

Instead, Charles was represented by John Sullivan, a hard-boiled Savannah lawyer who emphasizes he's "not a bleeding-heart liberal." For three years, Sullivan and his assistant, Gil Stacy, tried to reopen the case. "It was almost like a chain reaction," Sullivan says. "We would pick up something here and something there, and we were filing briefs on each enumeration of error. I think the trial court was very concerned that there might have been an error.

"I deliberately strung this thing out because we

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felt there were a lot of people who would substantiate us with a high degree of evidence. I know many people claim defense lawyers string out trials too long. But if this had not been done, perhaps Earl Charles would have had the unwonted distinction of being the first man put to death [since the Supreme Court ruling] in Georgia."

Georgia's death penalty law, upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1976, is a model for the nation. It provides for the segmented trial the Supreme Court demanded: one trial to determine guilt or innocence; a second, if necessary, to determine whether the death penalty should be imposed. Such a procedure, the Court ruled, is legal if the law provides "objective standards to guide, regularize and make rationally reviewable the process for imposing the sentence of death." Georgia's experience with the law, however, hardly justifies the Court's confidence that it will be fairly applied. Earl Charles had the misfortune to be tried in Savannah, where juries have handed down more death sentences than in any other urban area in Georgia. Had he been tried in Atlanta, or in north Georgia, where few death sentences have been pronounced, he might well have received a different verdict.

Finally a policeman's evidence freed Earl Charles. A Tampa policeman recalled talking to him on the day of the murder; a note about the conversation was in the officer's log book. The court, which would not believe the time cards, the rent receipts or the boss's testimony, believed the officer. A new trial was ordered, and the charges were dropped.

More than anything else, it is luck that was responsible for Earl Charles's release. Had he not had a supportive family and a lawyer convinced of his innocence; had he been subjected to the speeded-up appeal and execution process demanded by Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice Harold Nichols, Charles might now be dead.

Unfortunately, his case is no isolated example of justice guessing wrong. Less than a year after the release of the Dawson Five after eighteen months in jail on a phony murder charge for which they could have been sentenced to death, only three years after Freddie Pitts and Wilbert Lee were released from a Florida prison after twelve years awaiting execution for a murder they did not commit, the Charles case is only more evidence of the fallibility of American courts—and of the dangers of capital punishment.

Charles, who is still adapting slowly to life outside the crowded Chatham County Jail, has become a firm opponent of capital punishment.

"It's something that affects every individual in the United States," he says. "I don't even know how the people looked. I was several hundred miles away, but I was picked up, extradited back to Savannah, tried and convicted for something I didn't know nothing about. It's just through the grace of the Creator that I got through. Advocates of capital punishment say it won't happen, but this shows you it can happen. That's why I say it affects every individual in the United States, because who knows who could be next?" □

'Sort of Dampens Your Spirits'

SCOTT DERKS

Dr. Clovis H. Pierce of Aiken, S.C. shocked a good many sensitive Americans in 1973 when he demanded that all of his welfare maternity patients having three or more children submit "voluntarily" to sterilization or forgo further natal care. At the time, Aiken boasted only three doctors, two of whom would not treat Medicaid patients. Thus welfare mothers—most of them black and poorly educated—were forced to accept Dr. Pierce's view on population and tax control or drive to Augusta, Ga., 25 miles away. One woman, confronted with Dr. Pierce's alternative, charged that she was threatened with a court order if she did not sign the consent order, so she did. Another said she was told that, unless she was sterilized, she would be yanked off welfare, so she agreed. In a two-year period, sixty-seven women were sterilized.

Enter Edna Smith Primus: one year out of law school, the first black woman to be graduated from the predominantly white male University of South Carolina School of Law and vice president of the unpopular South Carolina American Civil Liberties Union. "One of the members in Aiken asked for someone to come down and talk to the women who had been sterilized about their rights and what recourse they had," Primus recalls. She went, talked to the small gathering and advised them that damage suits could be brought against physicians who coerced women into being sterilized. She didn't need to explain that coercion could be subtly pervasive. A month later, Primus wrote one woman a letter that would take her to the United States Supreme Court—not to fight sterilization of the poor but to protect her reputation as an attorney. Acting as a cooperating attorney for the ACLU, Primus had written: "The American Civil Liberties Union would like to file a lawsuit on your behalf for money against the doctor who performed the operation." The woman, who had been sterilized and whose baby was under treatment by Dr. Pierce, declined. But by this time national television was on the scene. The state was discussing action against Dr. Pierce and a reactionary group called "The Silent Majority" was circulating a petition to support welfare sterilizations. Two black women who had been sterilized filed suit against Pierce and several state officials, asking $15 million in damages. A jury awarded one of the women $5 in damages, but a federal appeals court reversed it, finding the doctor had not violated

Scott Derks is a journalist in Columbia, S.C., who writes for the Atlanta Constitution *and other papers in the South.*

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Paul Robeson Speaks

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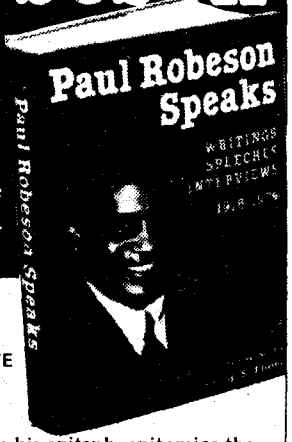
EDITED BY Philip S. Foner



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any federal civil rights laws.

Meanwhile Primus's letter—written to offer legal assistance to someone in need—had fallen into the hands of Dr. Pierce and was eventually turned over to the South Carolina Bar Association, which charged that the letter constituted solicitation—ambulance chasing. "I think it was a vindictive act," Primus says quietly now, with no edge in her voice. "Dr. Pierce had that letter the day it was received. We even learned later that the woman called me from the doctor's office to ask questions about the letter. But when he could not get the suits dismissed, he sent the letter to the bar, fifteen months after it was written." The state bar conducted a hearing and administered a private reprimand to the young lawyer, saying she had solicited business on behalf of the ACLU, "which would benefit financially in the event of successful prosecution of the suit for money damages." The ACLU, acting for Primus, appealed to the State Supreme Court, which not only agreed with the bar's ruling, but upped the punishment from a private reprimand to a public chastisement, publishing the decision in the bar journal and the court record. Primus says, "The issue of sterilization was really volatile then. The ACLU was not a popular group in the state. Someone had to be a scapegoat."

Five years after the letter was written and nineteen months after the S.C. Supreme Court reprimanded Primus, the U.S. Supreme Court rendered a decision. In May 1978, it upheld the right of lawyers personally to contact clients when representing nonprofit groups that engage in lawsuits as a "form of political expression." The ruling strongly reinforced an earlier ruling involving the NAACP. The ACLU had warned that a negative decision would have drastically curtailed the activities of the organization and other public-interest groups which represent the poor. Not only had they fought a legal point, they had won a substantial victory. The ACLU was jubilant. Primus, the victim-victor, was just glad it was over. "If I'd known all this was going to happen, I never would have written the letter. No one wants to be disciplined."

The 33-year-old attorney shielded her parents and family from the long-running turmoil. Newspapers carrying stories about the controversy were thrown out before anyone could read them. She never discussed the problem with her parents or other people closest to her. "I was glad to get the decision," she told the Associated Press the day it was announced. The whole experience "sort of dampens your spirits. I have to be so careful of anything that happens from now on." Her office is plain, almost bleakly so. Some days she has more time than clients. Her husband sometimes jokes, "You better get a job—one that pays money." But she likes her family practice of divorces, separations, custodies and the other tangles people get into. She has not handled a case for the ACLU since she wrote the letter. And Dr. Pierce has refused to handle any more Medicaid patients—with or without sterilization. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Black Writing In the 1970s

ROBERT BONE

To survey the poetry and fiction published by black Americans in the last eight years is beyond the scope of a short essay. I have tried to identify major trends and major figures. I apologize to those authors who may justifiably feel that their talents have been overlooked.

The current decade has been a time of consolidation in the history of black writing. We are living through an aftermath. Innovation came so thick and fast in the previous decade that we are only now beginning to assimilate it. To understand the contemporary scene we must hold two very different eras in contrasting perspective. Simply put, the 1960s were a time of *divergence*; the 1970s of *convergence*.

Fifteen years have passed since LeRoi Jones broke the racial truce in Greenwich Village and began to "off the honkie" in his poems and plays. Before you could say Imamu Amiri Baraka, the Black Arts Movement was launched, and a revolution in consciousness was under way. This movement, we can see in retrospect, was part media event and part hustle, but behind the footlights of revolutionary theatre something deadly serious was taking place. That something was the psychological transformation of the younger generation of black writers.

Consider the formative years of those who came of age in the 1960s. Born in the 1930s, these writers were 25 years old on average when John Kennedy acceded to the Presidency. Sharing the hopes of the Kennedy era, they marched with Martin Luther King in the early 1960s. Then came the assassinations. Then the church bombing in Birmingham, and finally the riots, until the faith that they would some day overcome lay in ruins on the streets of Watts.

Their bitter disappointment was the soil in which Black Power grew. Some few among them reaffirmed their integrationist convictions, but most moved on to Malcolm X and Frantz Fanon. The latter taught them the necessity of decolonization, beginning with their own minds. Politically they moved from liberal humanism and nonviolent resistance to the notion that power resides in the barrel of a gun. Theologically they abandoned the Christian deity for Muslim or voodoo gods. Artistically they repudiated Western literary models. They underwent, in short, a profound transvaluation of values.

As the Black Power ideology hardened into dogma, repressive tendencies appeared. Of this development Ishmael Reed has written, "I became cynical very early when I saw some of the militants picking up the habits of the oppressors." The treatment of dissenters and opponents disturbed Reed. Either you endorsed the party line or were attacked as an Uncle Tom. Censorship, slander and invective were among the means employed. Not for the first time in human history, what began as a liberation movement ended as a new orthodoxy.

There would be little point in tracing the decline of the Black Arts Movement into the 1970s. We should find silence and disarray, reassessment and new beginnings, and in some few instances, dogged recitals of the catechism. In the course of its brief ascendancy, revolutionary nationalism produced little writing of enduring quality. But there is no denying its impact on every living black author. We might well begin with the older generation who were caught in mid-career by the advent of Black Power.

Among the major voices of the past, Gwendolyn Brooks cast her lot unequivocally with the revolutionaries. The story of her ideological conversion, which occurred at a Fisk University Writers' Conference, is recounted in her autobiography, *Report from Part One* (1972). Thinking to make her modernist verse more accessible to common folk, she strove for a time to simplify her technique. But already there are signs that she has moved beyond the constraints of ideology to a frame of mind in which her dazzling technical facility can reassert itself.

At the opposite extreme, Ralph Ellison emerged as the most eloquent opponent of revolutionary nationalism. Stressing his American identity, and insisting on the highest standards of his craft, Ellison has functioned as a center of moral energy and model of artistic integrity for all serious black writers. While he has not published in recent years, he has been writing steadily, and there is reason to believe, from occasional glimpses of his work-in-progress, that his long silence will be viewed in retrospect as a prolific gestation period.

James Baldwin vacillates between the two extremes. Drawn despite himself to the Muslim myth, he cannot quite relinquish the Christian framework of his adolescent ministry. Those magnificent fables of identity which constitute his early work have given way to the jeremiads of more recent times, but the transition has been curiously incomplete. Rhetorically, he threatens with the fire next time, only to retreat once more to the milder rainbow sign. The result is an ambivalence of tone, with fatal consequences for his art.

No one of this distinguished triad, whatever the future may bring, has published his or her best work in the decade of the 1970s. Yet several other writers over 50 are currently making important contributions in their respective genres. Robert Hayden's *Angle of Ascent* (1975), with its Platonist and Ovidian underpinnings, its translucent surfaces, and all-embracing spirituality, is a major event in the history of Afro-American poetry. And his new collection, *American Journal* (1978), bears further witness to a richly maturing art.

In the realm of fiction, three titles are outstanding. Ann Petry's *Miss Muriel and Other Stories* (1971), in its deft handling of small-town, black-and-white America, reflects a sure command of the short story form. Albert Murray's *Train-Whistle Guitar* (1974) is a *Bildungsroman* in the blues idiom: its setting near Mobile, Ala., and its theme the coming to manhood of a Southern Negro boy. William Demby's new novel, *Love Story Black* (1978), displays once more, this time in a Manhattan setting, those qualities of hipness and contemporaneity that we have come to expect from the author of *The Catacombs*.

Returning to the Kennedy generation, with whose spiritual crisis we began, let us trace their progress into the years of their maturity. They are now from 35 to 50 years of age, and their careers, it seems to me, have unfolded in a dialectical progression: *thesis*, Euro-American values, as embodied in the Christian/humanist tradition; *antithesis*, Afro-American and ancestral-African values, celebrated as a counter-myth; *synthesis*, a fusion of Euro-American and Afro-American cultural forms of which jazz has been the prime historical example.

Two accomplished writers of fiction will serve to illustrate the first stage of this dialectic. Both are hardy swimmers in the mainstream of American letters. James Alan McPherson has published two distinguished collections of short stories of which the first, *Hue and Cry* (1969), has brought him recognition from the National Institute of Arts and Letters, while the second, *Elbow Room*

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(1977), won the recent Pulitzer Prize for short fiction. McPherson's respect for his craft, as well as his courage in choosing the road less traveled, have justified a major claim on our attention.

Like many Southern writers, black or white, Ernest Gaines is essentially a regionalist. All of his fiction, including the impressive *Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1971), is set in Louisiana bayou country, and deals with such traditional themes as the nature of manhood and the inescapable burden of the past. His new novel, *In My Father's House* (1978), is an attempt to mediate the conflict of the 1960s and reconcile the differences between the generations. Exploring these concerns through a father-son relationship, both in its psycho-cultural and theological dimensions, Gaines has broken new ground.

The second stage in our dialectic is a liberation of the artist's vision, a freeing of the black imagination from its entrapment in white myth. To this end, various counter-myths have been employed. Baraka and his imitators have drawn upon the Muslim myth with its central icon of the white devil. Authors like Paule Marshall and John Wideman have worked with "Third World" myths of decolonization or of African diaspora. Ishmael Reed has invented a mythic structure of his own based on voodoo rites and practices. And the black feminists have devised appropriate myths of extrication from the male world.

The Muslim myth enjoyed its heyday in the 1960s. On the threshold of the new decade, however, books employing a wider range of myths began to appear. Paule Marshall's well-crafted novel, *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People* (1969), portrays the defeat of white paternalism in a West Indian setting. Her peasant heroes assert their independence in the face of a foundation-sponsored "self-improvement" scheme. And her heroine, a London-educated cosmopolitan, achieves an independence of her own by severing various cultural and personal ties to the white world.

John Wideman is perhaps the most gifted black novelist of his generation. His second novel, *Hurry Home* (1970), displays a technical virtuosity found only in the most sophisticated contemporary novels. Its subject is the spiritual homecoming of a deracinated black, caught between the blandishments of European culture and the funky sources of his black identity. His third novel, *The Lynchers* (1973), is the story of four urban blacks who plan the lynching of a white policeman. While the lynching fails, it transforms the lives of those who have imagined it. A contemporary version of *Don Quixote*, this novel treats commitment to black revolution much as Cervantes treats commitment to knight errantry.

Ishmael Reed employs satire as a mode of psychological emancipation from false values. To the Christian/humanist tradition, which he perceives as a con, he counterposes the Neo-Hoodoo Church, through which he aims to put the whammy on the white folks. Essentially a trickster operating in the Br'er Rabbit tradition, Reed has understood from the beginning the futility of trying to out-muscle Br'er Bear. Outwitting him is still the way to run your game. This stratagem has produced a series of lively satirical novels of which *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972) is perhaps the most memorable.

Toni Morrison in the novel, Toni Cade Bambara in the short story, June Jordan in poetry, and the versatile Alice Walker in all three genres, are the outstanding feminist voices. Having joined in the larger effort to free the black imagination from white myths, they next trained their guns on male myths. But this has left them at something of a dead end. If black writers as a group now must ask themselves, "After soul, what?," black feminists must face the same question concerning sisterhood. Toni Morrison's third novel, *Song of Solomon* (1977), strikes me as the first serious, if not altogether successful, effort to confront this issue.

Two very important writers, one a novelist and the other a poet, embody the final stage of our dialectic: the negation of the negation, the correction of the correction, the cultural fusion that I perceive as America's future. The first is Leon Forrest, who as former editor-in-chief of *Muhammad Speaks* may be said to have presided for many years over the dissemination of the Muslim myth. The second is the poet Michael Harper whose work evolves, after great spiritual anguish, from a poetry of outrage to a poetry of healing.

Leon Forrest is the author of two strong novels: *There Is a Tree More Ancient Than Eden* (1973), and *The Bloodworth Orphans* (1977). Both are written under great emotional pressure, in the apocalyptic language of the Book of Revelation. Both depict the historical experience of black people in this country as a long religious agony, a myth of redemptive suffering. The first novel tends to abstract the spiritual maturation of its young hero too relentlessly from its historical and social context, but the second gains in power by presenting us with an ampler social world.

Michael Harper has published seven volumes of verse since 1970, including his most recent collection, *Images of Kin: New and Selected Poems* (1977). His aesthetic is derived from the musical theory and practice of the late tenor saxophonist, John Coltrane. Among his principal thematic concerns are the blues as a means of coping with personal suffering, the concept of an African continuum, explorations of the Afro-American cultural past, and the ritual of naming one's spiritual ancestors (the delimiting of kin).

OBSERVING WHALES THROUGH BINOCULARS

Fountains in a gray field,
Whales spout off the rough beach. A gray sky
Meets the gray sea in a vague horizontal.
A black flipper scythes the water

Beneath the gulls scattered
Through scarred lenses. No matter that
The wind registers upon a ruptured sea.
The ear records a near soundless

Tableau: only movements controlled
By the elements they move forth among.
Three blue figures watch from the white sand
And corn grass wavering

In a wavering air. Without binoculars,
We are diminished forms, figures
In a figurative scape. An orange-and-black dragger
Cuts through the short waves. The sky is an irruption

Of glamour into the material world.
We do not need language
To demonstrate the whales making their way north.
They are absorbed by their blue observers.

William Logan

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"In my father's house," as Ernest Gaines insists, "are many mansions." Not just one. That is the force of his protest against the monolithic mind-set of the 1960s. Black Power drove a wedge between and within the generations. Yet anyone who reads the poetry of Robert Hayden, and then of Michael Harper, will discover not a generation gap but a spiritual and aesthetic continuum. And anyone who reads Ernest Gaines, and then Leon Forrest, will understand that they have arrived, albeit by very different routes, at the same destination. A new convergence is in the making. □

A State of Uneasy Peace

JACK HICKS

PROUD SHOES. *By Pauli Murray. Harper & Row. 282 pp. $12.95.*

I first read Pauli Murray's "Story of an American Family" at age 13 in 1956, a raw and bewildering time when I sought to come to terms with my family's own interracial past. Some twenty-two years later, a hop and a leap over two turbulent decades, the book has been expanded and reissued, and proves once again a moving and remarkable work of research and imagination.

Murray takes her title from a line by Stephen Vincent Benet: "Here is somebody walking in America in proud shoes." To that mature end, she details a history of four generations of the Afro-American Smith/Fitzgerald/Murray clan, reaching back to her great-grandfather's birth in 1808. "The writing became for me the resolution of a search for identity and the exorcism of ghosts," she tells us. "I began to see myself in a new light—the product of a slowly evolving process of biological and cultural integration, a process containing the character of many cultures and many people, a New World experiment, fragile yet tenuous, a possible hint of a stronger and freer America of the future."

Begun during the McCarthy era, as the civil rights movement was slowly gathering strength, Murray's quest to reconstruct a vanished past was an attempt to declare her unique American heritage. An early Freedom Rider and batterer at doors closed to women and

Jack Hicks is the author of Cutting Edges: Young American Fictions for the 1970s *(Holt, Rinehart & Winston) and the forthcoming* In the Singer's House.

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PHOTOGRAPH OF RAIN

You take so much
Time with the angles
And still you can never be sure.

In the grass a galaxy stands up:
Across the lawn,
Pictures of sleek streets.

Somewhere, a woman
Pulls the satin of a long
Night from her eyes.

If you could find the perfect
Light to subdue the body:

If
You could hold the dark lines
Against your face.

You want to take so much.

Patrick Milliken

blacks (Harvard and the University of North Carolina), she grew weary of being considered an "outside agitator" and a "Communist," and set out to walk paths trod by her New World ancestors. *Proud Shoes* is the impressive result.

What Murray repeatedly found were figures of what Ralph Ellison calls "the puzzle of the one-and-the-many," the mystery of how each of us—whatever our diverse origins—is at once ethnically and culturally unique and commonly American. Like Ellison and the earlier DuBois, Murray is especially sensitive to the fact that to be black and American is often a state of uneasy peace, a condition of "double consciousness" between two "warring ideals."

Her book flows through two veins—the families brought together in her maternal grandmother, Cornelia Smith, and in her grandfather, Robert Fitzgerald. Unlike Alex Haley's *Roots*, which dwells most effectively on African continuations in the black American family, *Proud Shoes* traps the beast of American slavery, in particular, the strange and tragic domestic struggle between master and slave, and the ironic "gift of white blood" that still nourishes and suffocates many Americans.

Grandmother Cornelia Smith was one of four mulatto children sired by white Chapel Hill, N.C. lawyer Sidney Smith. An unregenerate rebel aristocrat, Smith fell in love with his chattel Harriet. Unwilling and unable to fully commit himself, he could neither embrace nor dispatch her, and his poisonous decline is captured in stark detail in Murray's narrative. The Smith clan was only grudgingly included in the author's first outline, and Grandmother herself is living testimony to the schizoid effect of being partially in two worlds, finally in neither: "She sailed back and forth like a shuttlecock between the extremes of her own dual legacy as half slave and half slave-owning Smith."

Her husband, Robert Fitzgerald, was a freeborn Yankee and self-described bastard grandson of an amorous Irish lord. His pride and character steeled his family's soul, and tales of his romanticized heritage soothed their Smith anxieties, "strengthened the growing shell" of Pauli Murray's ego, "protected the soft underbelly and wobbly legs of a creature learning slowly to navigate in a cruelly segregated world. More than anything else," she concludes, "it kept me from acceptance of my lot."

Fitzgerald's colorful and admirable exploits take up much of the text, as we follow him from Delaware to Pennsylvania to North Carolina, from Ashmun Institute (now Lincoln University) to the Union Army and Navy to Reconstruction schoolmastering in the upper South. He occupied his grandchildren's hearts and imaginations—particularly Pauli's, whose parents died when she was 3—and it came as a cruel shock to her when she stumbled across his father's manumission papers of 1832, when his Quaker master freed him at age 24. A hundred years of family history fell at a single glance: his tales and pride to the contrary, Grandfather Robert Fitzgerald had origins as a slave. Shamed already by her Smith side, Murray was now faced with the reality of Fitzgerald blood. A time for sober reckoning: "Slavery had done such violence to the human spirit that the very memory of it was intolerable long after people had outlived it," she painfully concluded. "Even in my time many were trying to grow without roots at all, plucking their sustenance from the air about them. We Fitzgeralds had choked off part of our roots and hidden our deep scars beneath a lopsided pride."

Thus there is a dual movement in *Proud Shoes*, one of Pauli Murray's discovering the tragic history of her grandparents (indeed, all Afro-Americans), and of her accepting the pain and rarer joy of that past. She writes with a bright anger at the erosions of slavery and its continuing deformities—to black and white alike; but her sympathy is especially with those still in the middle, the unwilling agents of love and animosity: her grandparents, tragic and admirable as they are, her Aunts Dame, Jeffers, Small.

The best chapter of *Proud Shoes* is an unwritten one, for surely Pauli Murray's achievements deserve a place in her narrative. Activist, academic, lawyer, poet, she co-authored the Constitution of Ghana, helped found the National Organization of Women (NOW), and recently celebrated mass as one of the earliest ordained female ministers of the Episcopal Church.

Barring that omission, Murray's book wears well after several decades: she was ahead of her time in 1956, and is contemporary, without being faddish, in 1978. She writes with a clear eye, compassion, and rightful, controlled anger at our weaknesses. She realizes that we are all now in this together, as she wrote in "Dark Testament," dedicated to her mentor Benet forty years ago:

We will lay siege, let thunder serve our claim,
For it must be told, endlessly told, and you must hear it.
Listen, white brothers, hear the dirge of history,
And hold out your hand—hold out your hand.

Kgositsile: How You Sound

LEN FULTON

CALLALOO #2: A Tri-Annual Black South Journal of Arts and Letters.

". . .it is not theme or subject matter that makes a poem Black or African. It is finally how you sound, which is finally nuance, which is finally cultural context, that makes the difference."
—Keorapetse Kgositsile

Kgositsile, interviewed in *Callaloo #2* by editor Charles H. Rowell, is a South African poet who came to America in 1962 after having decided that he was "never ever going to work for anyone in South Africa again." The author of several books (the latest is *Places and Bloodstains*, Achebe Publications, 1975), Kgositsile discusses his youth in Johannesburg and his early days in New York. He refused college in South Africa because the government had just introduced "Bantu Education, which means a kind of educational system in which Africans were essentially trained to be subservient to whites."

Starting out writing short stories, Kgositsile read Europeans and Americans such as Dickens and Lawrence until he discovered Richard Wright's *Black Boy* and realized he did not need European models in order to write. Thereafter there were other influ-

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ences—Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Baraka (LeRoi Jones), A.B. Spellman, David Henderson, Ishmael Reed—and in fact Kgositsile became a poet in 1963 or 1964 and "stopped trying to mess with fiction." Baraka helped open up his thinking, made him more receptive to people like Malcolm X and Frantz Fanon who in turn helped him open up memories of an earlier wisdom from his native South Africa, in Tswana and Sotho literature, which "informed the music or the rhythm in my work."

Kgositsile acknowledges that, as many critics believe, he is one of the few Africans who have made a bridge between Africa and black America. "I believe my work is contemporaneous with *me*," he says, affirming that he has never felt like a foreigner to the black community in America. His work in fact is an interweave of music that is "Africa on the Continent and Africa in America," and it contains "doses of poison for the oppressor." This poison, this definition of allegiances, is the only way that writing by a black person anywhere on this planet can claim validity.

The constant collective style Kgositsile is after informs the individual style, so that no one expresses *himself* so much as he expresses the ideas, philosophy and wisdom of the collective group. Kgositsile believes that Africans and black Americans are such a collective group, a group to which he applies the term "pan-African." In his poem "Point of Departure: Fire Dance Fire Song" he begins by relating identical stories told to him by two old men—one in Alabama, one in South Africa. "Distances separate bodies not people" is the first line of the poem. The second part shows Kgositsile to be an intense admirer of Patrice Lumumba, and he says of that part: "If we in our lives embody the thrust, the ethos, of people like Lumumba and move, then we could be close enough to shake hands with our freedom." Finally the poem calls for action: "it is the rhythm of unchained Spirit/will put fire in our hands/to blaze our way/to clarity to power/to the rebirth of real men." No one in the black community, he believes, is exempt from participation at the physical level in establishing the power needed, not even the artist. "We are all committed to values which have nothing to do with writing. When we write we express those values."

Kgositsile has been powerfully influenced by black music, and feels that at its best poetry is music, or what he calls "frustrated music." His poems, he says, are a verbal expression of the music he has been listening to. Furthermore, he believes that form in any artistic medium is not accidental; that it comes out of specific cultural determinants. Hence, the black poet writing in "European forms" (such as the sonnet) still has to struggle. In concluding he says: "It is unfortunate that there has to be a struggle to have the kind of particularity that you would find in an Aretha Franklin, or a Coltrane, or a Rollins. When you move a little further and look into what is being produced as literature, you realize that it is not theme or subject matter that makes a poem black or African. It is finally how you sound, which is finally nuance, which is finally cultural context, that makes the difference."

The interview with Kgositsile is the centerpiece of this second issue of *Callaloo*, edited by Rowell, Tom Dent and Jerry W. Ward. The magazine is filled with poems, stories, photographs, plays, reviews, and even a symposium on *Roots* (and some critical distinctions between the book and the TV show). Of particular interest is "Ritual Murder," an intense one-act play by Tom Dent in which an omnipresent narrator interviews friends and relatives of one Joe Brown Jr., who has murdered his friend. With a slow, almost cadenced agony, each character explains the murder in his or her own understanding (or misunderstanding) while Joe Brown and his murdered friend describe a night full of madness when a life full of frustrated dreams is no longer tolerable. "He said he wanted to believe there is hope," says the murder victim. "I told him there is no hope. You a black mother-fucker and you may as well learn to make the best of it. Then he just blew." Included at the end of the play are director's notes by Chakula Cha Jua, who directed the piece for its premiere performance at Ethiopian Theatre in New Orleans in 1976.

The next issue of *Callaloo*, now at press, will focus on novelist Ernest Gaines. It will include photography by Gaines, essays on each of his books through *Miss Jane Pittman*, and reviews of his latest novel, *In My Father's House* by William Wiggins and Ishmael Reed. There will also be an interview with Gaines by Charles Rowell, and a bibliography of works by and about Gaines. The issue will also contain poems, stories and essays by Al Young, Clarence Major, Michael Harper, Charles Johnson and many others. In the words of editor Rowell, "the purpose of *Callaloo* is to present, without outside control, the creative writing, critical thought, and visual arts of the black South, a community whose creativity has been grossly neglected." *Callaloo* is available for $6 a year and may be ordered through the Department of English, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky. 40506. □

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INDIGENOUS MUSIC

NAT HENTOFF

A while ago, when jazz was almost invisible amid all the white glitter of rock, tenor saxophonist Billy Harper erupted: "That thing about 'jazz is dead' is ridiculous. That really takes me out when somebody says that, because jazz is the musician himself. When they say 'jazz is on the way out,' isn't that like saying the black man is on the way out?"

But many young black musicians scorn the term "jazz," preferring "black music," or in percussionist Milford Graves's case, "African-American music." The word "jazz" has been banished because, as trumpeter Lee Morgan explained, "It's not a word that *we* made up, it's a word where we were told what it was."

Nonetheless, it is clear who these players and composers mean when they talk of their progenitors—such jazz legends as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, et al. Or, as 26-year-old trombonist George Lewis puts it: "I feel bound to all other black musicians down through history." Can only black musicians play this music still widely known as jazz? Some would nod affirmatively, but others make room for certain whites, provided, says drummer Rashied Ali, it is "stipulated that it's a *black* art form."

And that's accurate. There have been whites who play the music with personal authenticity but there has not been a single, pervasively influential innovator who was not black: from Louis Armstrong to Cecil Taylor today. Some critics used to call such an assertion "reverse racism," but they could come up with no candidates to disprove it. Maybe someday a nonblack will turn everyone's ears inside out, as Lester Young and John Coltrane did, but I do not expect to live to hear it. The roots, though mixed now, are still too deeply black—from field hollers and work songs to spirituals and itinerant blues—for that to happen soon. It could eventually. In Reform synagogues, it would hardly matter these days if a Catholic were hired to sing the music for Yom Kippur. (The Yiddish roots there have withered from disuse.) In fact, I recently heard such a bleached ceremony in a Connecticut synagogue. But in the Orthodox *shuls*, the *chazans* still wail the Old Country chants, as Muddy Waters can in black secular retreats on Chicago's South Side.

In any case, perdurable white racism still unwittingly nurtures black culture by preventing any possibility of Reform-style assimilation—though not copious predatory raids on that culture by such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. Many jazzman took unsurprised note that millions of white American teenagers made millionaires of white pillagers like Mick Jagger without ever having heard of the black songsters who "inspired" him.

Jazz, or whatever the name, being indisputably black at core, it might be useful in this issue of *The Nation* to cite some indispensable recordings of that resplendently dark and protean force.

A long fabled, but extremely hard-to-obtain, recording by the most exultantly creative of all Duke Ellington's orchestras has just been released by Book-of-the-Month Records—*Duke Ellington at Fargo, 1940/Live.* (You don't have to be a member to get it. For information: Book-of-the-Month Club Records, Camp Hill, Pa. 17012). This is what Max Roach was talking about when he called jazz America's "true classical music."

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

[The Portrait by Nadar]

You were the hero inherent in Eros—
"builder of cities" all right
but saboteur as well—wherefore you despised

such indispensable prey
as readers who failed, despite your example,
to pluck themselves a garden

from the garbage of the past. If we look hard
at things they seem to look back;
out of a writhing greatcoat you stare at us

with that splendid impatience
which is the deepest French virtue, "taken"
by your lifelong friend between

hyperboles—at one extreme lilac gloves
and black curls to your collar,
at the other Jeanne's insulted beauty and

bald paralysis—but here
implacable, holding fast to a passion
for exactitude. Today

you published ten poems you wanted to call
Lesbiennes *until advised*
by Hyppolite Babou to name them Fleurs du Mal. . .

Why not? you are so busy
with your current Poe translations and puzzled
by favors to be curried

from George Sand, "poor dear dreadful little lady,
always having a crow to pick
with Jean-Jacques!" You look at things, though, look until

you don't know if they are you
or you they: it is the moment when what was
ruin becomes a model,

Paris a synonym for both. Arbiter
of ennui, you rummage on:
Mexican idols, a gilded Buddha, rag dolls

might as well be our true God,
offensive concretion of the temporal
process. We cannot erect

the New Jerusalem until we destroy
Babylon; what do we use
in the building, you asked, but the same damned stones?

Richard Howard

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Another black creator of astonishing range and depth of emotive invention is Charles Mingus. Among his sometimes volcanic, sometimes intimately reflective collections are *Blues & Roots* (Atlantic), *Mingus Ah Um* (Columbia) and *Tia Juana Moods* (RCA).

For pristine blues, sung with a lashing passion no white American singer, in any idiom, has come close to approaching, there is *The Bessie Smith Story* (Columbia, three volumes.) And for a seminar in how a black sensibility can transform pop material into exceptionally subtle and high art, it is still possible to obtain in some stores (or they can be ordered), Billie Holiday's *Golden Years* (Columbia, two volumes) and *The Billie Holiday Story* (Columbia, three volumes).

And the jazz player most in a state of lyrical grace (witty and yet poignant, proud and vulnerable) was Lester Young whose *The Lester Young Story* (Columbia, three volumes) is as timeless as the tales from black life told by all these other carriers of this stubbornly compelling heritage.

"You know what annoys the hell out of me?" said bassist Jimmy Garrison, who had worked with John Coltrane and many other jazz masters. "It's when people come up and ask if I ever recorded any serious music." □

MUSIC

DAVID HAMILTON

VIVALDI: *Tito Manlio.* Margaret Marshall, Rose Wagemann, Julia Hamari, Norma Lerer, Birgit Finnilae, Claes H. Ahnsjo, Giancarlo Luccardi, Domenico Trimarchi. Berlin Radio Chorus and Chamber Orchestra; Vittorio Negri, cond. RCA Red Seal ARL3 2869. $23.98 (three discs).

Orlando furioso. Victoria de los Angeles, Marilyn Horne, Lucia Valentini-Terrani, Carmen Gonzales, Lajos Kozma, Sesto Bruscantini, Nicola Zaccaria. I Solisti Veneti; Claudio Scimone, cond. RCA Red Seal ARL3 2869. $23.98 (three discs).

HAYDN: *L'isola disabitata.* Linda Zoghby, Norma Lerer, Luigi Alva, Renato Bruson. Lausanne Chamber Orchestra; Antal Dorati, cond. Philips 6700 119. $17.96 (two discs).

MOZART: *Mitridate, re di Ponto,* K. 87. Arleen Auger, Edith Gruberova, Ileana Cotrubas, Christine Weidinger, Agnes Baltsa, Werner Hollweg. Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra; Leopold Hager, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 2711 021. $35.92 (four discs).

La Betulia liberata, K. 118. Kari Loevaas. Birgit Finnilae, Claes H. Ahnsjo, Siegfried Vogel. Berlin Radio Chorus and Chamber Orchestra; Vittorio Negri, cond. Philips 6703 087. $26.94 (three discs).

La clemenza di Tito, K. 621. Lucia Popp, Janet Baker, Yvonne Minton, Frederica von Stade, Stuart Burrows, Robert Lloyd. Chorus and Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Colin Davis, cond. Philips 6703 079. $26.94 (three discs).

CIMAROSA: *Il matrimonio segreto.* Arleen Auger, Julia Varady, Julia Hamari, Ryland Davies, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Alberto Rinaldi. English Chamber Orchestra; Daniel Barenboim, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 2709 069. $26.94 (three discs).

Except for the familiar Mozart comedies and the revered though infrequently played Gluck tragedies, 18th-century opera has as yet no real home on the modern stage. Though connoisseurs and scholars may enthuse over the occasional revival, the public is usually baffled. In particular, nobody knows what to do with *opera seria,* that leisurely genre in which the whole generally proves to be somewhat less than the sum of its parts—those parts beings the innumerable arias, each raptly contemplating a single (and simple) emotion, while in between the plot mechanically thickens (or, as often, chases its own tail). There's no cumulation in *opera seria,* as a rule—simply succession.

Just how far this can go, we see in the recording of Vivaldi's *Tito Manlio* (1719), which runs to four hours and purports to be complete except for some cuts in the recitatives. However, having absorbed that statistic, you should turn instead to the recording of *Orlando furioso* (1727); though considerably abridged, this is sung—especially by Marilyn Horne—with the kind of assurance and virtuosity that the music demands and that it hardly receives in the Philips recording, just though Negri's direction may be. Routine baroque opera isn't worth doing without such singing, any more than vaudeville comedy is worth reviving without a sense of timing.

Haydn's *L'isola disabitata* (1779) belongs to a different tradition; all the recitatives are fully accompanied by the orchestra and enriched with much thematic work, while the arias are relatively less significant. The lumbering performance is a low point in Dorati's Haydn opera series, nor is the singing attractive.

The first two Mozart works are special cases of another sort—the work of a boy in his mid-teens. *Mitridate* is a full-scale *opera seria,* lasting more than

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three hours, to a libretto after Racine. Not a cause for great wonder, I think, is the writing of so large a work by so small a boy; given the conventions of the form, the scale is almost automatic, and this small boy had been listening to all the best operas in Europe for several years. The real surprise is that in a few of the arias real expressive power springs out from behind the studied formality. (Aspasia's aria, No. 21, is a good example.) Though ploddingly conducted, the performance is reasonably capable; the bright spot in the cast is the American soprano Arleen Auger, who recently sang a charming Marzelline (in *Fidelio*) at the Metropolitan Opera.

Betulia liberata is, strictly speaking, an oratorio—to which, however, most of the *opera seria* conventions applied. A notable exception is the presence of a chorus, well used by Mozart, who even manages to make something out of a protracted theological dispute that really doesn't have much to do with the central subject of Metastasio's libretto, the tale of Judith and Holofernes. The emotions involved here are evidently more accessible to the composer than were the regal passions of *Mitridate;* though uneven, *Betulia* has some strong passages, and conductor Negri makes a good effect with them. The singing is quite capable.

In 1791 Mozart fulfilled a commission with his final *opera seria, La clemenza di Tito.* By this time economy was in order, and he responded with the ellipticity of genius; his terse arias and ensembles imply far more than did the spacious ones of earlier years. Whether all this wonderful music transcends the limitations of the genre I cannot say until a staged performance comes along; I would not be without these records, stirringly conducted by Colin Davis. The male voices might be warmer, more ductile and Italianate; Janet Baker's vigorous assault on the role of Vitellia is exciting, but also rather coarse.

Shortly after Mozart's death, Cimarosa's *Matrimonio segreto* (1792) won the favor of the Austrian Emperor who had not taken to Mozart's comic operas. What strikes us first, in the inevitable comparison, is Cimarosa's leisurely pace: the music buzzes busily but in fact progresses from one thing to the next only by slow steps; less demanding listening, it is also less rewarding. A more idiomatic performance might show it off to better advantage, though Miss Auger is once again impressive. At the start of the second act, the juxtaposition of Alberto Rinaldi's Italianate diction and production with Fischer-Dieskau's Teutonic attacks makes one wonder whether the concept of style means anything at all to the conductor (who is, nonetheless, quite musical even when he's off base). □

THEATRE

HAROLD CLURMAN

Though the explosion of firearms does not disturb me in films, I can hardly bear the sight of a gun or a pistol on stage, and a shot from either convulses me. Seeing E.L. Doctorow's *Drinks Before Dinner* has taught me the great dramatic utility of a revolver (Public Theatre). How else could I have borne the play's philosophic discourse?

When Christopher Plummer, representing a citizen of our day, extracted a weapon from his pocket and pointed it at the guests (including his wife) at a more or less *chic* dinner party, I found myself listening to what he had to say and what they had to declare in response. It was a suspenseful situation even though the gentleman said he had no intention of hurting anyone—and he doesn't.

You see, Edgar (Plummer) opened the evening's festivity by asserting that the party, like all such gatherings, was a bore with everyone engaging in New Yorker banality, typical in fact of the platitude of contemporary social relations. After the first shock, when everyone had become convinced that the man's despair might prove fatally serious, there seemed a possibility, despite his assurance to the contrary, that he might fire the revolver in his hand and kill either himself or one or more of the assemblage.

No one could dissuade him through humor or reasoned argument from his bleak view of everything: there is little but doom to look forward to and there is little point in living. When the honored guest of the occasion arrives—another surprise and another tightening of the tension—we find that he is none other than the Secretary of State (who might be Henry Kissinger). With the threat of his weapon, Edgar manages to bind the Secretary to a chair (will he be the victim of Edgar's aberration?) and continues the debate on the universal dilemma.

The only ones wholly unperturbed by the situation are the hostess's two children. How wise of them. Thev too speak enthusiastically, as if by rote, of "the end of the world" (how could they avoid echoing such common gossip?) and so they too sit quietly and listen, strange to say without falling asleep. As I would have done, if it had not been for "death" in Edgar's hand.

Though a doctor and others of the professional class were present, they struck me as a collection of idlers. They were moreover representative of a tiny though verbose part of the population. But no matter. They might simply have admitted that though their lives might appear vain and the earth's continuity a fading illusion, they liked living and, for all its grief, enjoyed it.

But the Secretary of State, to one person's horrified indignation, admits that nothing can prevent the big bang which will wipe out nearly all of us. What then? A saving remnant will renew the cycle of life.

When Edgar, finding the Secretary a most sympathetic and intelligent person, releases him, the Secretary condemns Edgar and his like as the scum of society. For do not such people live in a country with the highest rate of material well-being and protection that civilization has ever achieved? How dare the "Edgars" or any of us complain? So the guests (except for the disgusted Secretary) proceed calmly to dinner and the regular ritual of their fashionable conviviality.

I suppose it would suffice for purposes of theatre criticism only to state that the play is essentially undramatic and therefore dull, because nothing is involved except talk on a level of a TV round-table discussion. There is slick magazine literacy but very little wit, character, commitment or passion in it. Still, it is simple courtesy to the author to set down another kind of comment and criticism.

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Our living comfortably—there are many, many more who don't—hardly obviates the need to protest, struggle, even fight to make a better world. Discontent can be creative as well as merely troublesome. The impulse to resist the senseless drift of events is one of the saving graces of the human condition. Without it we are slugs, and not truly alive. Utopia itself should not satisfy us anymore than Eden pleased our primal parents. Those who really believe (very few do) that our society is ineluctably headed toward extinction and do not strive to combat everything which leads to it are already half dead.

Mike Nichols has done everything possible to make *Drinks Before Dinner* tolerable, especially in the choice of his cast which besides Plummer includes the impressive James Naughton, Josef Sommer and Charles Kimbrough. The women fare less well only because they have been given much less to say or do, except to listen, tremble and weep.

The means for a proper production of Mikhail Bulgakov's 1940 novel *The Master and Margarita* are not available to a workshop project (almost a rehearsal on several bare platforms) such as that undertaken by Andrei Serban at the Public Theatre. The original book is fantastically complex and exuberant in its fantasy. Its stage realization, if possible at all, could be envisaged only if such facilities as the Polish and German (and American musical) theatres command were forthcoming.

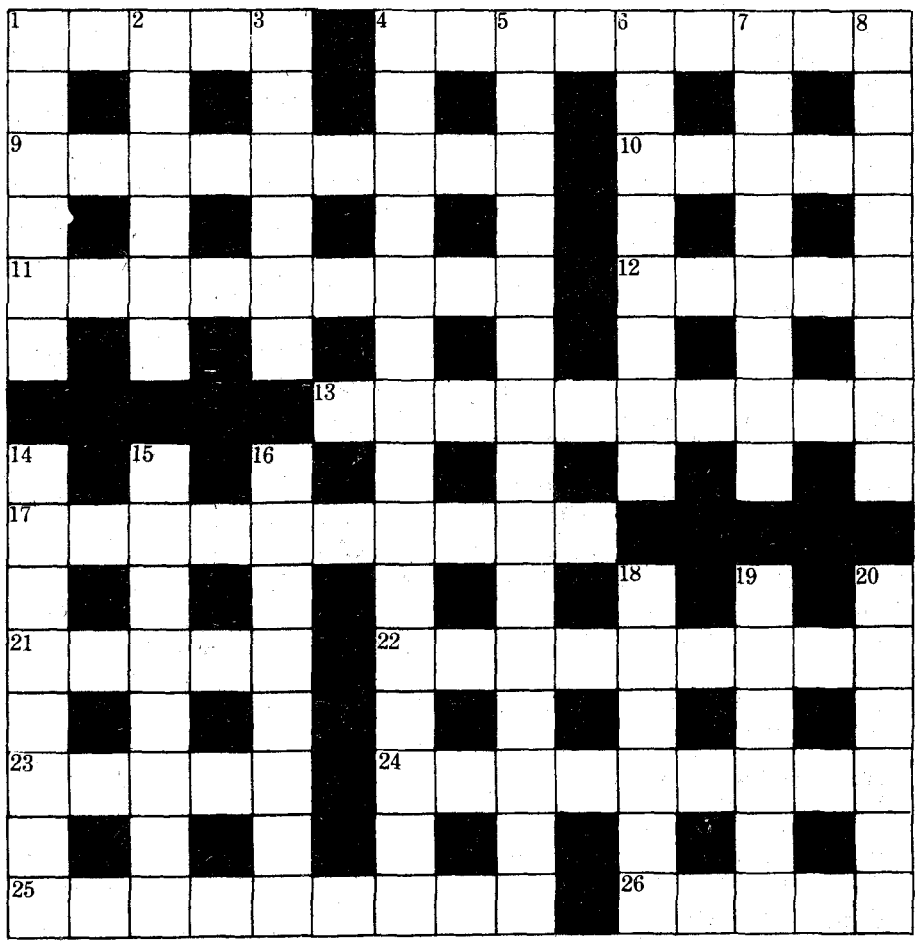
Still, I appreciated the scenic skills with which Serban has treated the nearly insoluble problems the occasion presents within the confines of the inadequate space of one of the Public Theatre's smaller halls. For all its crudity, much of the performance was engaging, and at moments even provocative.

What seemed to propel and sustain it, apart from the actors' devotion and enterprise, was Serban's need to expose his abhorrence of the bureaucratic powers and the social obfuscation which stultify artistic expression at certain times in certain communities. Specific allusion to the Soviet Union in this regard is clearer and more explicit in the play than in the novel itself and in the end with an invocation to "Mother Russia" almost embarrassingly so.

But the ironic imagination, the unusual play of mind, the richness of background reference, the exceptional quality of imagery made even this rough and incomplete event a relief from the tasteless humdrum of our "big shows." We should also welcome to our boards the Czech actor Jan Triska who in his debut here reveals himself a remarkably endowed actor.

Crossword Puzzle No. 1753

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and 7 down Such a figurative boost is not necessarily a matter of habit. (1,4,2,3,3)
4 What is said to be a problem of the girls of 25. (9)
9 and 10 See 23 across
11 A fast way to travel at this? You have to agree with it! (9)
12 William Tell, for instance. (5)
13 What might be the last word in writing before the French land with one of those capes. (10)
17 Claiming to be something—not necessarily a college teacher. (10)
21 Part of the sacred office—at least part of the service. (5)
22 You usually don't make such a gang of fighters merely by giving the players weapons. (5,4)
23 9 and 10 Care for a dried herring, for example? (An uncomfortable comparison, perhaps.) (4,1,4,3,2,5)
24 His valley was certainly verdant. (Nelly seems to be in poor shape, but is good-hearted.) (9)
25 One star is enough for some girls! (9)
26 Arch-emperor? (5)

DOWN

1 Influence a very loud representation, etc., badly represented. (6)
2 Watering the lawn because of misbehavior in a porker? (6)
3 Hired someone, or just acted upset? (4,2)
4 Conan Doyle's work, rather than describing the story of Hester Prynne, suggests what happened when the decorator got loose in the den. (1,5,2,7)
5 What is worth a couple of points in what football backs carry? (Loners don't count on it.) (6,2,7)
6 To rob was wrong, according to what furnished entertainment in the park. (8)
7 See 1 across
8 Ran up with one to four stars, according to what the story was. (8)
14 Needle-like bodies use clips, perhaps. (8)
15 Relative to a spot on the body, it's a superior type of fustian. (8)
16 One who comes out walking light as a feather, as they say? How jaunty! (8)
18 Coming notice with an opening. (6)
19 Fancy dance and French stage production? (6)
20 A sign of approval coming up is just dandy! (6)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1752

ACROSS: 1 Joint action; 9 and 10 Poor sport 11 Dire; 12 Rituals; 13 Slurred; 15 Flounder 16 Yields; 18 Stills; 21 Scrabble; 24 Catchup 26 Muzzles; 28, 29 and 30 Bare-faced liar; 3 Comes to pass. DOWN: 2 and 8 Our Mutua Friend; 3 Nestled; 4 Avon; 5 Totally; 6 Older 7 Social; 14 Cross; 17 Embezzles; 19 Trajan 20 Shuffle; 22 Round-up; 23 Leeway; 2 Credo; 27 Scot.

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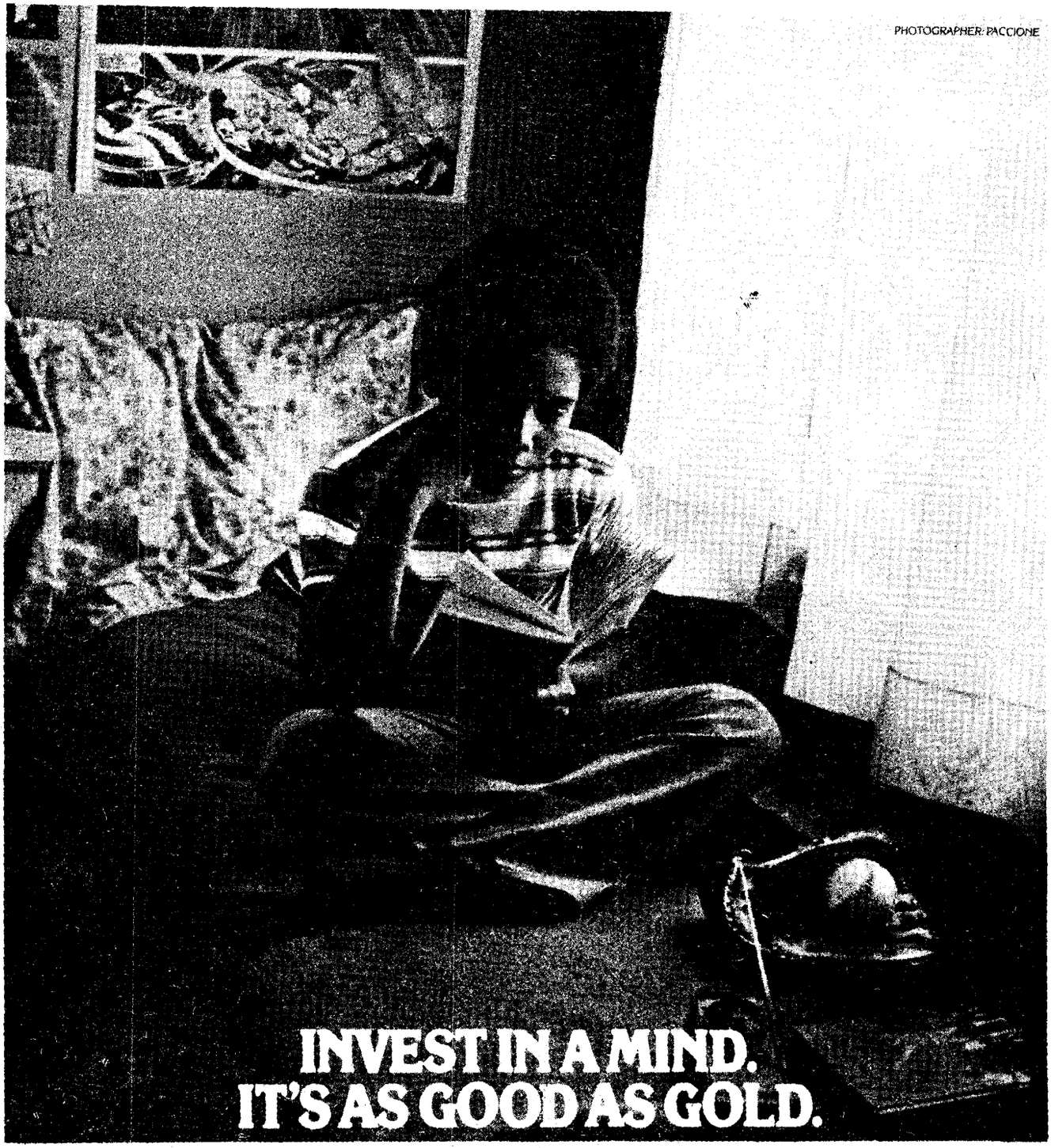

Each year the United Negro College Fund pays off with thousands of black graduates with valuable training America's industry needs today. It's no wonder that UNCF member schools have become a natural resource for accountants, managers, economists, engineers and technicians.

And that's only scratching the surface because there is so much raw talent out there. Take this 11-year-old child, for example. Right now his mind is like raw material ready to be developed. But this can happen only if you are willing to invest in the United Negro College Fund.

Your contributions give our young people the opportunity to attend the 41 private, predominantly black, four-year colleges and universities sponsored by the UNCF. If we couldn't keep our tuitions low and grant financial aid, some 70% of our students couldn't attend college at all.

UNCF graduates have proven to be a precious commodity to the business community. And that's as good as gold.

Send your check to the United Negro College Fund, Box N, 500 East 62nd St., New York, N.Y. 10021. We're not asking for a handout, just a hand.

GIVE TO THE UNITED NEGRO COLLEGE FUND.

A mind is a terrible thing to waste.

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